

# Music & Letters

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# Music & Letters

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# Music and Letters

JULY, 1932.

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VOLUME XIII

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## MUSIC IN MEREDITH—I

THIS writer now floats in the trough of the wave which, rising fifty years ago with *Diana*, tossed him to heights almost Shakesperean in the first decade of the present century. No longer is it thought clever to like him, or indeed to understand him. Even those who do not veer with every wind of literary fashion, those who perhaps, in younger days, drew in his work as eagerly as he drew in the south-west gales on Box Hill, feel chastened now. Yes, he posed intolerably; he was ashamed of the ancestral shop in Portsmouth; he affected to scorn neglect and adverse criticism, yet grumbled at them constantly even when fame had come. Prone to obscurity of style, partly from inborn idiosyncrasy, partly from the nature of the subjects he loved to treat, in his later days he allowed himself to bewilder his critics deliberately. His ethical treatment of character is out of fashion, his grand pagan optimism too. He is noisy, dogmatic, intimidating with his hail of wild hard wit. As narrator he is about the worst of great novelists. Thus may we let the devil's advocate run on.

In due time a fresh wave will send him to the heights again, sooner perhaps than we think. Meanwhile, detailed study of him from various aspects will do more good than dangerous generalisation. We choose an aspect not of the first importance. Where, indeed, may the music be in this keen-witted psychologist, this satiric champion of the Comic Spirit? *Sandra Belloni* and *Vittoria* are not his best known books. *One of our Conquerors* is among the least read of them all. In these three the art bulks largest; elsewhere in the novels we come on it incidentally. And how much music, in another sense, may be found in his verse, so often crabbed and tuneless? There are, of course, a few wonderful things like 'The Lark Ascending.' Also there are bursts of poetic prose, instinct with musical imagery and

lyric outcry, such as the famous 'Penny Whistle' chapter in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*. Thus we map out roughly the scope of our enquiry. This article will deal with the actual music-making in Meredith's novels, in particular with his presentations of the art in the triad of novels already named. Another article will, we hope, treat in general of his use of musical imagery, of the distinctive nature of his listening faculty, and of the functions of these things in some of his finest lyric poems.

Music, though not a passion, was clearly an instinct with him. As such, and as far as it went, it seems to have been a true one. 'He had a delicate, untrained ear for good music,' writes Mr. Thomas Seccombe in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'and could play well by ear.' Such statements, as musicians know, may not mean very much; of actual training we have no record. But letters and novels reveal the fact that song, an overflow of his native lyrical impulse, came into his mind and out of his lips pretty readily, at least in his younger days. One reason for his becoming incompatible, at twenty-five, in the house of his father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock, is said to have been his humming of song-snatches, in and out of season. People in the blither pages of his novels burst not infrequently into such tags, into 'beginnings and ends of songs' as Harry Richmond calls them. Sometimes they are parodies or extemporisations; some ring soundly of the folk, others of the commercial ballad-monger. Typical bucolic music-makings are to be found in early chapters of *Evan Harrington* and *Sandra Belloni*. In the latter Meredith writes cavalierly of 'the Giles Scroggins, native British, beer-begotten air,' of its 'lumping fun and leg-for-leg jollity'; he lacks Hardy's patient, sympathetic attitude to folk music. But in general such scenes in his novels are good humoured and discerning enough. For the ballad-monger he displays the right kind of scorn. An example of this may be taken from the scene in *Feverel* where the mischief-loving Adrian has arrived at the house of Richard's cousins, the Foreys, and has spread there the devastating news of Richard's runaway marriage:

Music was proposed. There are times when soft music hath not charms; when it is put to as base uses as Imperial Cæsar's dust and is taken to fill horrid pauses. Angelica Forey thumped the piano, and sang: 'I'm a laughing Gitana, ha-ha! ha-ha!' Matilda Forey and her cousin Mary Branksburne wedded their voices, and songfully incited all young people to *Haste to the bower that love has built*, and defy the wise ones of the world; but the wise ones of the world were in a majority there . . . so the glowing appeal of the British ballad-monger passed into the bosom of the emptiness he addressed.

We may set against the faded musical mid-Victorianism of this

passage another from the same book, where Richard rows Lucy on the lake in Raynham Park. Here Meredith weaves faultlessly into the poetic mood of his scene the music that rises to the young girl's lips:

She sang first a fresh little French song, reminding him of a day when she had been asked to sing to him before and he did not care to hear. 'Did I live?' he thinks. Then she sang to him a bit of one of those majestic old Gregorian chants, that, wherever you may hear them, seem to build up cathedral walls about you. The young man dropped the sculls. The strange solemn notes gave a religious tone to his love, and wafted him into the knightly ages and the reverential heart of chivalry.

On such informal, spontaneous levels Meredith has a sure touch on the music-making of his characters and a sound taste in it too. This taste is at its finest where the prose-poet in him rises supreme, less sure in comic passages. And at times this casual singing helps to give to his scenes a much-needed actuality. For Oscar Wilde said all too truly that Meredith's characters 'live in thought.' How often, as their talk flashes on and on, do they seem cut adrift from this world of sensible, material things! Subsidiary figures, in particular, may seem mere types or shadows, never taking on life. Let them sing a song and we begin to know them.

In *Sandra Belloni* music is no longer a casual feature but one of the main threads of the novel, as it also is, to a less degree, in the sequel *Vittoria*. The heroine of both, Emilia Alessandra, takes on in the second work her new symbolic patriotic title. There were good reasons why the supreme musical creation of Meredith should be a singer and a patriot of Italian-English birth, a 'true artist-soul,' as has well been said, 'with a patriot soul behind it of equal stature.' In the 'sixties the Italian war of liberation laid strongly on the author that idealistic spell which, more effectively than in most wars, gilded over the native horror of the thing itself. Meredith also remembered a friend of earlier days, Miss Emilia Macirone, a fine singer who bequeathed to his own Emilia certain physical features—the 'superb Italian head' of which we read in the opera scene, 'with dark banded hair-braid, and dark strong eyes under unabashed soft eyelids.' Like Meredith's heroine, she could permit good nature to get the better of convention. She sang to harvesters in a barn in Bucks, much as Emilia once fled from the house of the Poles to entertain the rural Junction Club of Ipley and Hillford. Again, 1864 saw not only the publication of *Sandra Belloni* but its writer's second marriage, to a wife who was herself a good musician. Little wonder that at this time Meredith should have drawn most fully on the musical aptitudes and sympathies that were in him, linking them with the motive of

patriotism in that portrayal of noble yet living and credible female character in which lay his peculiar strength.

In our space we can only hope to indicate roughly Emilia's leading characteristics as a musician and to appraise summarily the degree of Meredith's skill in the portrayal of them. He introduces her with consummate art. In the first pages her voice rings through a Surrey woodland, at the fall of a night in May, as people from a country house near by, who have heard rumours of her, thread their way enquiringly between the trees :

A sleepy fire of early moonlight hung through the dusky fir-branches. The voice had the woods to itself, and seemed to fill them and soar over them, it was so full and rich, so light and sweet. And now, to add to the marvel, they heard a harp accompaniment, the strings being faintly touched, but with firm fingers. . . . There was no flourish in her singing. All the notes were firm, and rounded, and sovereignly distinct. She seemed to have caught the ear of Night, and sang confident of her charm. It was a grand old Italian air, requiring severity of tone and power. Now into great mournful hollows the voice sank steadfastly. One soft sweep of the strings succeeded a deep final note, and the hearers breathed freely.

Emilia's voice was a contralto, the type which, as Meredith once confessed (in strange English) in a letter, 'is always heavenlier to me than the most upper-sky soprano.' The aria, we learn, was by Stradella, a name which carries the description soundly enough. The passage displays adequately the author's happier vein as a describer of music. Within the romantic setting, he relies upon imaginative analogy of a simple, intimate kind and upon a plain, chary use of technical language. Always he rides easily on his flood of poetic metaphor; with minims and crotchets he goes warily, and stumbles sometimes. The very simplicity of such workshop terms as he uses gives them, in Emilia's talk especially, the impressiveness of perfect truth. 'I could pitch any notes, and I was clear,' she says of her 'prentice attempts, 'but I was always ornamenting, and what I want is to be an accurate singer.' Her character, with its early rawness and its constant growth in resource and power, stands out against the background of English country house life in which her lot is at first cast. Her unquestioning devotion to music stands out against the everyday, dilettante attitude to the art shown by the Misses Pole, who patronise her, and their brother the sentimentalist Wilfred, who causes her much emotional distress. To him, in the exquisitely framed love scene by Wilming Weir, she roughs out a curious adumbration of Beethoven. We give its essential strokes :

He seems as if he were the master of my soul, mocking me, making me worship him in spite of my hate. I came here, thinking only of you. I heard the water like a great symphony. I fell into



dreaming of my music. That's when I am at his mercy. . . . He is like the god of music. . . . I have seen his picture in shop windows: the wind seemed in his hair, and he seemed to hear with his eyes; his forehead frowning so. He sees angels, cherubs, and fairies, and imps, and devils; or he hears them: they come before him from far off, in music.

An overwrought Beethoven, to modern minds; true enough, however, as conceived by an emotional girl, who as an Italian patriot has to overcome her hatred of a German, as a singer to conquer obstacles to his worship unknown to the mere instrumentalist. Perhaps Meredith made her worship him just because he was the greatest of composers in Victorian estimation. A fearful wildfowl in trim dovecoats, he held more of awe about him than we, with our familiarity, can well conceive of to-day.

*Sandra Belloni* might well have had a fuller musical background in the hands of a writer who finished off and used up his subsidiary characters more carefully than Meredith did. Of Purcell Barrett, organist of the church near the Poles' mansion, we gather that he is poor, and a gentleman; he comes to a sad end; but no particle of difference does the fact that he is an organist make to the cast of his mind. Wisely, perhaps, the freethinking Meredith scarcely ventured in his novels on the domain of English church music. Hardly better than Mr. Barrett is Tracy Runningbrook, the poet whose vehement talk hails, we are told, from that of Swinburne. Now and then he flashes into life; and his attempt at an operatic libretto, to Emilia's music, draws from the heroine some sensible remarks that smack richly of the singer. What is the use, she asks him, of words, however fine and graphic, if they're 'like iron to the teeth'?

Yet one character steps out from the background to form a magnificent foil to Emilia. He is the Greek impresario 'of Parisian gilding,' Antonio Pericles Agriolopoulos. Some good judges think him a failure. Professor Oliver Elton has called him 'a prose creation worthy of Ben Jonson'; this remark shows us how we should take him. He is a man with a 'humour,' a ruling passion; he is the impresario in wild, vivid, glorious caricature. What is love, what is patriotism, what is anything compared with the training and the preserving of Emilia's voice, the launching of Emilia on her career of glory? When he first hears her in the wood at night, Mr. Pericles, who has money, is prepared to 'buy a newspaper'—in other words, to corrupt the British Press for her sake. One outburst will serve to set him before us in all his ogreish vehemence; he has just learnt of her love for Wilfred:

I shall not mind zis . . . not when you are trained. It is good,

zen, and you have fire from it. But, now! little fool, I say, it is too airy—too airy! How shall you learn—eh? with your brain upon a man? And your voice, little fool, a thing of caprice, zat comes and goes as he will, not you will . . . you zat I should make a Queen of Opéra! . . . Zen, I say, you shall lose a man. Let him tease and sting—ah! it will be magnifique: Aha! ze voice will sharpen, go deep; yeas! . . . But now? Little fool, I say!

Truth, as singers know, lies at the root of this. Well might Pericles be anxious; Emilia's troubles, before the end of the novel, do bring about a temporary failure of her voice. But at last, her training finished, she is ready, in the first chapters of *Vittoria*, to perform in Milan the *prima donna's* part in the opera of *Camilla*. Packed with allusions, this opera is the signal for an Italian rising against the Austrian power. The embroiled swift action of *Vittoria*, its endless alarms and excursions, suit Pericles no better than does the surge of its national spirit or the splendour of its scenic backgrounds. He may fling down to the heroine a mighty cheque as the house rises at her; he may try afterwards to kidnap her into safety; but for a man of his humour this panoramic novel is no place. He fades out; we remember best his indignant, pathetic query, 'What has a voice of the very heavens to do with your fighting?'

Emilia, too, who is now Vittoria, remains her old self only so far as the crowded action, unusual in Meredith, will allow her. The famous opera scene, much too long, comes only partially to life. Meredith tells us the whole involved, allusive plot of *Camilla* and strains his technical knowledge badly at times. One passage of Vittoria's, for instance, 'massive in monotones, almost Gregorian in its severity' ascends at a certain point for a stroke of dramatic emphasis; and with it, her contralto voice 'rises to pure soprano'! The slow boiling-up of excitement in the theatre, as the purpose of the opera becomes clear, is portrayed vividly enough. Right at the end, a fine burst of pure lyricism stamps firmly on our minds the figure of the heroine, a symbol of reborn Italy, surrounded with her bodyguard of young men and pealing out the refrain:

Italia, Italia shall be free!

But of the musical nature of *Camilla* the inward ear can conjure up little that is definite, despite the author's laborious attempts. This is his clearest summary description: 'Severe as an old masterpiece, with veins of buoyant liveliness threading it, and with sufficient distinctness of melody to enrapture those who like to suck the sugar-plums of sound.' Many shelves full of operas would fit that description, which also commits itself to the fallacy that distinct melody is necessarily sweet. On the other hand, and apart from what it sings, the character of Vittoria's voice pervades the mind before the end,

for the author finds good words for it. Her power was 'an emanation, free of effort.' Her contralto 'belonged to the order of the simply great voices . . . pure without attenuation, passionate without contortion.' The great voice 'rarely astonishes our ears. It illumines our souls.' Meredith goes right here not so much through his resource in poetic analogy as through his psychological insight, that other string to his bow. Another voice, too, that of Irma the *seconda donna*, takes on real character in his description. In the opera she is an inimical person; she is also a foil (partly comic) to Vittoria, and of course a soprano. 'Aie!' goes Pericles as he hears her, 'what a long way it is from your throat to your head, Mademoiselle Irma! You were reared upon lemons.' Her voice revels in leaps; it is one 'with claws, that enter the hearing sharp-edged and leave it plucking at its repose.' Only too well do we hear Irma. Once again vigorous metaphor, not technical language, drives the impression home.

Her great scene over, Vittoria's character suffers in the endless 'episodes of the revolt and the war.' It becomes more of a symbol and is in danger at times of becoming a pawn. But in a noble touch at the end of the work music reasserts itself. A widow and a mother, we bid farewell to Vittoria on the day 'when an Emperor and a King stood beneath the vault of the grand Duomo, and the organ and a peal of voices rendered thanks to heaven for liberty. . . . And then once more, and but for once, her voice was heard in Milan.' Thus with sure art our thoughts are sent back to that first night in the Surrey woods. The voice, a sovereign gift, then raw and untrained as the personality, has gathered through the years, like it, a richness and a mastery born of experience; the brooklet is now a full river. Who will deny that between the two scenes there lives the noblest creation of a singer and an artist in English fiction? We can think of only one rival to her: George Moore's Evelyn Innes, who, of course, is put together with delicate skill and wide and flawless knowledge. Her musical background, all the subsidiary musical characters, are ranged round her with more art than Meredith commanded. By no possibility could his dreadful Mrs. Chump have invaded Mr. Moore's careful scheme. But here is just the trouble: Evelyn is put together. She is a museum piece; while, whatever her flaws, throughout *Sandra Belloni* and in many flashes of *Vittoria*, Emilia lives.

Most would-be readers are driven away from *One of our Conquerors* by the crazy flourish of far-fetched metaphor and epigram kept up during much of the first half of the book. But in late Meredith the situations are actually simpler than in the works of his prime; the obscurity is more on the surface, more a matter of language. And

here the main situation, worked out with wonderful skill as the flourish subsides, is the revelation of the equivocal position of Nataly, nominal wife of Victor Radnor, and the effect of this revelation on them and on their brave daughter Nesta. All three are musical; Victor is rich. An atmosphere of country house music-making pervades much of the novel. Victor engages professional singers, conducts his amateur orchestra, plays the flute. The author sketches in rather faintly a crowd of minor characters, whom Mr. Priestley cannot endure. Is he not too hard on them in his book on Meredith? For in so far as they fill in the musical atmosphere they are organic, not superfluous; this atmosphere has at least two definite functions. It emphasises, first, the instability of the Radnors' happiness. Their whole edifice of musical delight, so gay, so beguiling, is built on a quicksand; in the end it falls with a crash. Again, music helps to drive home many points of character, not only in the Radnors. There is for example that good, conscientious young man Dudley Sowerby, Nesta's unrequited suitor, who plays flute duets with her father:

[Music] contributed to his comelier air. Flute in hand, his mouth at the blow-stop was relieved of its pained updraw by the form for puffing; he preserved a gentlemanly high figure in his exercises on the instrument, out of ken of all likeness to the urgent insistency of Victor Radnor's punctuating trunk of the puffing frame at almost every bar—an Apollo brilliancy in energetic pursuit of the nymph of sweet sound. Too methodical one, too fiery the other.

Some people squirm at such writing; but surely the contrast between the two styles of performance is vividly established. Musical performance in its human aspects calls out especially well the keen wilful gusto of the later Meredith. Victor conducts his amateur orchestra in the overture to 'Zampa'; the piece 'takes horse from the opening.' Such touches bring the man before us; without them he would lose much of his insouciant brilliance, his air of defying fate. He is also a happy listener: to the 'babble' of Corelli—modern judges would find a more respectful term—or to 'the majesty of the rattling heavens and swaying forests of Beethoven.' Here are two apt suggestive figures, with virtue for more of the composer's music than for the fading 'Pastoral' symphony to which definitely they point. What can they be but first hand impressions of the author's? We suspect that if anyone in the novels is Meredith's own musical mouthpiece, Victor Radnor is the man. Let us hear him, and for the last time, on opera; the suspicion deepens. We give a few lines from a long tirade:

I held out against Wagner as long as I could. The Italians don't much more than Wagnerize in exchange for the loss of



melody. . . . The *Mefistofle* was good—of the school of the foreign master. *Aida* and *Otello*, no. I confess to a weakness for the old barley-sugar of Bellini or a Donizetti-serenade. Aren't you seduced by cadences? Never mind Wagner's tap of his pædagogue's bâton—a cadence catches me still.

Yes, this chimes in fairly with the direct indications we have of Meredith's taste in opera. It was that of the mid-Victorian amateur. The choice of a prima donna for the heroine of two long novels—that tells its own tale. Whatever the music of *Camilla* may have been like, it was pre-Wagnerian. We gather that Meredith's attitude to the German invader was at best one of regretful, tentative acceptance; he went so far once as to write to Frederick Jameson for instruction in the *Leitmotif*. But let him go and hear *The Flying Dutchman* at Covent Garden; he dashes down the remark that Albani was 'excellent' and all the others 'execrable'—the old attitude of the diva-worshipper. With his own Victor Radnor he would probably have subscribed to two other mid-century superstitions; that Wagner had banished melody from opera, and that he was a pedagogue. Even for a Victorian, Meredith's range of musical interest was narrow. Of oratorio he took no heed; of instrumental music, apart from Beethoven and a few small masters, very little. And this is the man who in other respects, as Mr. Priestley tells us, 'escapes from his age so completely that only chronology can reassure us'!

Yet he drew the noblest and most living figure of a woman singer in our literature, and the impresario Pericles, a triumph of the grotesque, and poor Victor Radnor, the mercurial amateur, with his pleasure house of sound ready to crash about his ears. Sometimes on abstract music, often on musical performance, and above all on singing he wrote, within the range of his liking, with wonderful zest and sense of quality. His riotous imagination shook out metaphor and analogy at need; his poetic faculty was his musical Pegasus; technical language just a sound hack, serviceable and rarely stumbling. Music made many of his characters real; song resounds on countless pages of his novels. And the root of all this delight was just his lyric impulse; no novelist has made us hear, as he has, the ultimate beauty and mystery of the human voice.

W. WRIGHT ROBERTS.

## JONATHAN BATTISHILL

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED RECOLLECTIONS OF R. J. S. STEVENS

RICHARD JOHN SAMUEL STEVENS (1757-1837) is known as a composer of glees to words by Shakespeare. 'Sigh no more, ladies,' 'Ye spotted snakes,' 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind,' 'Crabbed age and youth' are all well-written and effective pieces of music; 'The cloud-capped towers' is something more than that. Stevens was a hard-working professional musician. He began as a choir-boy in St. Paul's Cathedral; then he was a tenor glee-singer, an organist (holding the post simultaneously at St. Michael's, Cornhill, the Inner Temple and the Charterhouse); a successful teacher of the harpsichord, and (from 1801) Gresham Professor of Music. He collected a valuable musical library, the greater part of which is now in the Royal Academy of Music; he kept a diary from 1802 until within a few weeks of his death in 1837, and he wrote two volumes of 'Recollections' which have never been printed. The Diary, the 'Recollections' and a quantity of memoranda have recently come into my keeping. They are of extraordinary interest, both for what they say and what they do not say, giving as they do the point of view of a professional musician in England at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. They show John Christian Bach as he appeared to an irreverent choir-boy, Dr. Arne in the eyes of a singer who failed to collect his fees but collected good stories about the doctor instead, and Dr. Haydn as his symphonies struck an impressionable musician in his thirties. As to Mozart, we hear what Dr. Haydn said about him to Broderip the publisher, when the news of his death was made known in London; and Beethoven. . . . It has always been a tradition among Stevens's descendants that 'R. I. S. S.' never mentioned Beethoven; that however is not strictly true. Stevens does mention him, but not very cordially; while Schubert is not mentioned at all—as far as my reading has carried me in the difficult handwriting of Stevens's crabbed age.

The diarist is at his best with English musicians whom he knew well; and of these none stand out more clearly than Jonathan Battishill—remembered now, if at all, as the composer of fine cathedral anthems. Battishill was one of Stevens's earliest memories: he sang at the first concert which Stevens could

recollect, in 1764. It was held at Haberdasher's Hall; and Stevens, who although only six years old was already a chorister in St. Paul's Cathedral, had been brought to sing in the chorus. Giulia Frasi was there, the great Handel singer; and she made a strong impression, not only by her voice but also by her ear-rings.

'I now remember her person [he wrote fifty years afterwards]. She was a short fat woman, and had a remarkably clear voice; and (which attracted my notice considerably) she had on a pair of very fine brilliant ear-rings. Jonathan Battishill sang the principal tenor.' Again, 'the first English Opera that I attended as a Treble Chorus was *Almena*, the music by Jonathan Battishill and Michael Arne, in the year 1764. . . . It was at the Madrigal Society in the year 1771 or 1772 (I do not recollect which) that I made my debut as a composer. Still I remember the Confusion that came over me when my Master (Savage) gave me the Parchment Roll to beat the time to my own Compositions. . . . He gave me half a crown by way of reward. . . . Jonathan Battishill was so pleased with this effort, that he promised to give me *half a guinea*, if I would produce a Composition equally good, when he next dined with Mr. Savage. This was a great stimulus to me, and I went to work. . . . The next time that Battishill dined with Savage, my expectation was wound up to the highest pitch, thinking to be rewarded with the *half guinea*; but poor Battishill (as usual) got so dreadfully intoxicated very soon after dinner, that my Composition was never thought of. . . .

'Jonathan Battishill was one of the first boys in St. Paul's Choir that was instructed by Mr. Savage. He shewed even when a lad a superior understanding, and was always exceedingly fond of reading. Reinhold<sup>(1)</sup> (who was a contemporary with him in St. Paul's Choir) told me that Battishill had by nature, what other Boys were obliged to fag hard and labour for. His two Books of Songs (now called *Glees*) and his Anthems sufficiently testify his superior excellence as a Composer, and indeed it is difficult to say whether he was most to be admired as a Contrapuntist, a Melodist, or a Harmonist. He was also a most excellent Cathedral Organ player—one of the best that I ever heard.

'I remember him during my apprenticeship frequently dining with Mr. Savage, when I was delighted with his various performances. He sang Purcell's Songs, and accompanied them with an expression that

(1) A celebrated bass. 'Reinhold's father came to England with Handel. He left his family in Germany (who were related to a Bishop) to follow the fortune of the great Musician. Reinhold had an excellent Base Voice. He was a ready singer, a steady Musician, and had a very animated manner of expression.' (Stevens.)

has seldom been equalled : I have likewise heard him play Handel's Lessons on the *Harpsichord* in a fine style. His extempore organ playing was sometimes most superior : tho' at other times " he had been glad to slink away ashamed of what he had exhibited " : these were his words to me upon his extempore playing one Sunday at Christ's Church, Newgate Street, when I happened to hear him. With all this ability and promise of success, Battishill unfortunately was fond of, and addicted to, liquor ; and the influence of this sad propensity in the course of time destroyed all his energies, and with them his prospects and advancement in life.

' When a young man, he was for some time Deputy Organist for Dr. Boyce at the Chapel Royal. Being desirous of obtaining the approbation of this *great master*, he one day took a Composition to Dr. Boyce, requesting his opinion upon it? Dr. Boyce was at first rather shy in criticizing it, but Battishill having waited upon him for the express purpose, Dr. Boyce at length looked at it with great attention, and corrected it in various places, at the same time giving him his reasons for such corrections. This afforded Battishill great satisfaction, as he justly inferred from the Doctor's taking the trouble to correct his Composition, that he must see merit in it, and be well inclined towards him. Boyce who was no doubt pleased in observing the Genius of the young Musician, returned him his Composition with high commendations. Dr. Boyce then said to him, " Young man, will you have a glass of Mountain Wine? " (a common refreshment in the morning at that time). Battishill having readily accepted Dr. Boyce's offer, drank a glass of Mountain : he then helped *himself* to a second glass, which Boyce thought rather extraordinary. He however said to him, " Young man, you had better eat some Biscuit with your wine " (and produced biscuits). He began with the biscuits, and in a short time had actually drunk up the whole Quart of Wine, and eat all the biscuits, tho' it was not later than one o'clock at noon. Dr. Boyce would never after speak to him. " By this one silly act," said Battishill, " I forfeited the esteem of the only man in the musical profession, whose friendship I had laboured for years to gain, and with whom I had assiduously endeavoured to be intimate. I never recovered the disappointment that I experienced in consequence of this foolish action to the end of my life." This Anecdote I had from Samuel Wesley,<sup>(2)</sup> Battishill having told him the story. Samuel Wesley, another almost unrivalled, but excentric genius is

(2) Born 1766, died 1837. ' The most learned man in the Musical Profession. Taught himself the Violin. Sublime performer on organ or Piano Forte, all extemporary. Not a good accompanier of voices. Too loud; he *thumps*. A wretched singer. *Coarse*. Not a good lecturer. . . . A great admirer and performer of the abstruse Fugues and works of Sebastian Bach.'

lamentably at this time (1814) so much addicted to drinking as poor Battishill.

' Battishill was not only a great Musical Genius, but was also a Man of strong sense and quick sensibility, and he had an enthusiastic manner of expression. He retained the fondness for reading which had so early shown itself, and little as one should have expected it from him, he actually had read more *Theology* than most men. Particularly when he was a little enthusiastic with Wine, it was no uncommon thing with him to talk of South's Sermons, Tillotson's Sermons, and I think all the Sermons that were ever published. Samuel Wesley's father, who was a good classical scholar, having called upon Battishill at Islington, where he then lived, in order to see his library, told his Son Samuel Wesley that the Selection of Books was made with the greatest taste and judgment.

' About the year 1784, Mr. Savage having promised to dine with me at Lambeth, I invited a few of his Pupils to meet him: viz. John Percy<sup>(3)</sup>, George Pearce<sup>(4)</sup>, and Jonathan Battishill, as by that means we could have a little Vocal Music. My dear friend Henry Allen, my pupil Thomas Sedgwick<sup>(5)</sup> and the Revd. George Savage (Mr. Savage's son), were of the party. While Mr. Savage staid with us, Battishill behaved exceedingly well, and his Conversation was very entertaining. He sang several of Purcell's Songs with an ability and expression that I never heard before from anyone. Nor is it exceeded even by my friend James Bartleman. Mr. Savage left us at 8 o'clock: when Bat's good behaviour was all at an end. No sooner had we taken our Coffee, but he asked for spirit to drink. Rum was his favorite liquor, and not having any in the house, he really obliged me to send to a Public house for a quart of Rum for him. He drank it, and as was to be expected was almost mad with intoxication. He swore incessantly! He talked very loud! and very rudely thrust his hand in my Mother's face: in short, he behaved in so peevish, perverse, and even brutal a manner, that I was quite

(3) 'A member of most of the convivial Societies in London. He had a Tenor Voice. Had good expression in singing, and was an excellent Bravura performer. His voice was not very good, and what appeared to me extraordinary it never *mixed* or united with those he performed with. It was a coarse Tenor voice. Taught various persons singing. . . . They were meant to be public performers.'

(4) 'Appeared on Drury Lane Stage in the *Quaker*. He did not succeed. Had an engagement in Ireland, when Mrs. Billington and Inledon were there. He had a *base voice*. Here he did not succeed. His singing was not approved. . . . Pearce was a ready singer. *Vulgar in expression*. His voice not good, or extensive in compass. Always very fond of Vocal Music. . . . A pleasing person when young. Given to pleasure!'

(5) An ironmonger at Portsmouth, with a fine bass voice; a pupil of Stevens, who has much to say about him in his 'Recollections.' He sang Artabanus in Arne's *Artaxerxes* (1787).



shocked and most heartily rejoiced to get him out of the house. I intreated my friend John Haylock (who had happened to call upon us and was to return to the City) to take charge of him and see him safe home: but such was his violent and riotous behaviour, even in the street, that my friend left him in the custody of a Watchman, at the foot of Blackfriars Bridge, whom he had assaulted and abused.

'A similar instance of poor Battishill's unfortunate propensity occurred a few years ago, when Mr. Adams, a Member of the Catch Club, and a great admirer of Battishill's Compositions, invited him to dine at the Club, and took great pleasure in introducing him, as he was at that time a stranger there. But Bat (as usual) had no forbearance, and got violently intoxicated very early after dinner. Tho' the Catch Club at that time broke up at eight o'clock, yet Bat would not quit the room till eleven. At that time Mr. Adams accompanied him into St. James's Street; but was obliged to leave him then in the custody of the Watchman (whom he had violently assaulted) and was glad to get rid of him.

'A long time after he had dined with me at Lambeth, I happened to be going to Greenwich by the Stage; when, upon getting into the Coach at Lambeth Marsh, I was agreeably surprised to find Bat in the Coach. After the usual Salutation, says Bat:

"Dick, it is now three years since I dined with you in Lambeth Walk."

"Jonathan," replied I, "it shall be three years more, before I ask you to dine there again."

"I was not to blame" (replied Bat), "it was the liquor that was within me."

"I'll never trust that liquor again, Jonathan" (said I) "as long as I live."

'The four men passengers in the Coach laughed heartily at this strange *rencontre* (*sic*).

'Battishill was violent when provoked, and was sometimes led into great absurdity by his passion. The following Anecdote is an instance of it. He taught in the family of the Reverend Peter James at Greenwich (Mr. James succeeded to the Gentlemen's Boarding School kept by Swinden and Bracken). One day in teaching Miss James, he was violently displeased with her, perhaps not unjustly; she might be stupid, but rather obstinate. In a passion he sent for her father, and when he arrived he said to him, "Sir, if you do not box that girl's ears, I will never come into your house again." My friend James was really weak enough to comply, and actually did box his

daughter's ears at Battishill's desire. What was the consequence? The Child would never sit in a room with Bat, or be instructed by him again. This silly business was the occasion of my being employed to teach Mr. James's family instead of Battishill, and thus his petulance lost him three pupils.

' During the time that I attended Mr. James's family, we had one Evening a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music. Battishill was invited to it and came; and Mr. James having a good chamber organ of Robert Gray's make requested him to play a Voluntary. He accordingly sat down to the Instrument, but, "Oh what a falling off was there!" In fact at this time he was so besotted that it was no wonder that his faculties were much impaired and indeed almost destroyed. At this Concert, in compliance with Mr. James's recommendation, I took a glass of Orgeat. "What Dick," said Bat, with surprize, and loud enough for Mr. James to hear, at the same time seizing my arm, "drink soap suds! What, drink soap suds! Dick!" I could not help laughing at this strange exclamation: "Better have a Glass of Wine! Have a Glass of Wine."<sup>(6)</sup>

' Battishill's marriage did not tend to make him a happier or a better man. He married Miss Davies an Actress, who was the original Madge in *Love in a Village*.<sup>(7)</sup> The cause I do not know, but they did not agree; and during my apprenticeship, Webster the Actor lived in open adultery with Mrs. Battishill next door to Mr. Savage. "If ever I meet that Rascal," said poor Bat to some of his friends, "I'll stick a knife in his heart." Happily he never did (as I suppose) meet with Mr. Webster. Webster who was son of Dr. Webster of St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, had first studied the Ecclesiastical Law, in order to be admitted a Doctor of Civil Law in Doctor's Commons.

' When Battishill was elected organist of St. Clement, East Cheap,<sup>(8)</sup> his anthem "I waited patiently for the Lord" was performed at St. Clement's Church, in which I sang the Treble part. . . .

(6) Stevens was not an abstainer either, but he had rather a weak head. There was a tragical evening in 1799 when he and a party of glee-singers were invited by the Margrave and Margravine of Anspach to dine at Brandenburgh House. 'The Margravine sung, or rather, squalled, a Song. Everybody was delighted, excepting myself. . . .' But then the Margravine 'with great agility, carved two haunches of Venison herself, and sent it round to all the Company in Silver Dishes. . . . The Hock Wine was most admirable; I had drank about four glasses of this exquisite liquor, when it had such an effect upon me, that I was quite alarmed. . . . I really thought I was going mad. . . .'

(7) Battishill was at the time harpsichord player at Covent Garden Theatre, where he met Miss Davies, whom he married in 1763. Arne's *Love in a Village* had been produced the year before. Grove adds that Webster eloped with Mrs. Battishill to Ireland, in 1777.

(8) About 1764 (Grove).

I remember the talk of his being elected organist of Christ's Church, Newgate Street, on the death of Mr. Young.<sup>(9)</sup> . . . When Mr. Jones,<sup>(10)</sup> the Organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, died in the year 1796, Battishill declared himself a Candidate for the place; and having been educated in that Choir, had, certainly, a prior claim to every other candidate; but here, again, his intemperance cut short his hopes.<sup>(11)</sup>

The negotiations concerned with this appointment placed Stevens in a very awkward position; he was not in the running himself, and was therefore asked to give his opinion of Battishill's qualifications. He was at that time attending Miss Dulcibella Moore, daughter of the Archbishop of Canterbury, as singing Master. His Grace one day said that he had something particular to say to him. He began in this manner:

'I understand, Mr. Stevens, that Mr. Battishill is a Candidate for the place of Organist to St. Paul's Cathedral. I beg of you to give me a candid opinion of Mr. Battishill's abilities, as you say that you know him.'

Stevens answered that they had both been educated by the same master; and that Mr. Battishill was thought to be as good a Cathedral Organist as any person in London.

'So I have heard' (said the Archbishop). 'Now I beg you to answer me conscientiously another question. Is he a sober man?'

What could Stevens say? He had to admit that Battishill was 'very fond of liquor, and of course, subject to be frequently intoxicated.'

Was he a fit person to be organist of St. Paul's Cathedral? Stevens hesitates again, but the Archbishop presses the question. Could a drunkard be a proper person to be organist of any cathedral? Stevens agreed that he could not.

'So I conceive,' said the Archbishop, 'and so both the Bishops of London and Lincoln also think.'

The appointment went to Thomas Attwood, who had been a pupil of Mozart.

'Before I come to the last scenes of poor Battishill' (Stevens

(9) 1767.

(10) John Jones (1728-1796), organist simultaneously of the Middle Temple, the Charterhouse and St. Paul's Cathedral. A double chant of his composition was noted with approval by Haydn: 'this innocent and reverential strain.'

(11) Battishill had also been a candidate for St. Paul's Cathedral when John Jones was elected in 1755.

continues), 'I must introduce a letter which I received from him, as it was to request that Thomas Sedgwick, who was, at that time, instructed by me in singing, might be permitted to sing at Stepney Church for the Benefit of the Eastern Dispensary. Bat was to play the Organ.

DEAR STE,

I gladly embrace your kind offer of Mr. Sedgwick's assistance on Tuesday next, and will accordingly expect him at Longman's<sup>(12)</sup> where I propose dining.—But I have a favour to request of you and Him on mine own account?—I play on Sunday next at Stepney Church for the Benefit of the Eastern Dispensary; Bob Hudson's Pring<sup>(13)</sup> after the Sermon (by way of Anthem) will sing 'I know that my redeemer liveth'; now, would you be so kind, and so civil, as to permit our right trusty and well beloved Sedgwick to Vociferize (or warble)—Damn the Phrase! it can't, it shan't be warble, let be Vociferize 'Behold I tell you a Mystery, and then the Trumpet shall sound'! By Heaven, Sir, twou'd be the I know not what to the Charity, but for us (Sedgwick and myself) a crown of Pure Gold would be placed on *his head*, and Eke on that of thy friend

J. BATTISHILL.

For the love of God an answer, Oh! for a speedy answer ye Gods!

'Colonel Morris (who was killed in Holland, when the Duke of York commanded there) had an admirable Organ of Avery's make, and had been instructed in organ playing by Battishill for many years. In the autumn of the year 1801, which was not long after Colonel Morris's death, as I was going to Lambeth, I saw Bat sitting on the Wooden rails which were then in front of the Magdalen Hospital, in *deep* mourning; and he lamented to me, with great sensibility, the immense loss he had sustained in the death of his dear Colonel! He told me that he had never been well since his death, for Morris had been a kind pupil, and a worthy and sincere friend to him for many years. Poor Bat died the 10th of December the same year, aged 63 years. In his last illness the Physician said, "nothing more could be done for him. He recommended him to receive the Holy Sacrament." "And pray Sir," says the ignorant female attendant that lived with him, "How long will it be before it operates?" His celebrated Anthem, "Call to remembrance" was performed at his funeral;<sup>(14)</sup> and never was there a more appropriate Composition selected for such a solemnity, or introduced with so much effect. This Composition by my poor friend is unequalled by any *modern sacred Composition*.'

J. B. TREND.

(12) 'A Music Shop in Cheapside.'

(13) 'One of the Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral.' He was elected organist of Bangor Cathedral when only 17 years of age.

(14) He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

## JOSEPH HAYDN IN ENGLAND

On this, the bicentenary of Haydn's birth, one may well recollect his connection with England. Few people, perhaps, consider how close it was. One knows that he wrote the famous twelve 'Salomon' symphonies to be performed under his and Salomon's direction at the latter's concerts in London. One knows that he visited England twice, staying from January 2, 1791, to June, 1792, and again from February 4, 1794, to August 15, 1795. But it is not perhaps always remembered that Haydn wrote a great deal more in, or for, England besides the Salomon symphonies. Nor is the general influence of his London visits upon his art enough considered; or the fact that he was well known here by repute and by the performance of his works long before he came to this island in 1791.

With regard to this last point, one may observe that as early as in 1773 we read of a concert 'to conclude with a full piece of Mr. Haydn with four French Horns.' His 'celebrated overture' in D major also which was first heard here at the famous Bach-Abel concerts was already a favourite; as were others of his symphonies. ('Overture' is continually used for 'symphony' at this time.) While already as early as the year 1765, twenty-six years before his first visit here, and when Mozart was only a child of nine, the firm of R. Bremner announces the publication of quartets by him (though they had been already printed by another firm at Amsterdam).

In 1772 other publications in England follow. From 1781 onwards Haydn is in touch with the firm of Forster also, with which he did much business in the ensuing years. Between May, 1784, and October, 1785, alone he published six trios, eight symphonies, and six sonatas for piano and violin with this firm; and received £70 in payment, and by 1787 he had published with them as many as 129 compositions. His 'Stabat Mater' meanwhile had appeared *chez Bland* of Holborn in 1784. And he had written 'Twelve English Canzonets' for Longman and Broderip in 1790.

This perhaps is enough to prove that Haydn's name was well known in this country years before his arrival. And indeed it was almost a household word in the musical circles of the day. In Bristol, in Bath, in Leicester, as well as in London, his works had been given. Perhaps also in country houses and amongst rich amateurs in various parts. He was described in a journal of the time as one 'to whom



*the amateurs of the instrumental world look up as the God of the Science'; or again as one 'whose name is a tower of strength'; or yet again as 'a writer whose very name (on a work) is alone a sufficient proof of its merit.'* But to cap all one may well quote the words of the very pundit of the then musical world in England, Dr. Burney himself, who in his *History of Music*, published in 1789, acclaims Haydn in almost ecstatic words:

I am now happily arrived at that part of my narrative where it is necessary to speak of HAYDN! the admirable and matchless HAYDN! from whose productions I have received more pleasure late in my life, when tired of most other Music, than I ever received in the most ignorant and rapturous part of my youth, when every thing was new, and the disposition to be pleased undiminished by criticism or satiety.

While he later greets his arrival in London in a long and entertaining poem entitled 'Verses on the Arrival of the Great Musician Haydn in England,'<sup>(1)</sup> from which the following lines show the esteem in which the composer was held in England at that time:

Haydn! Great Sovereign of the tuneful art!  
Thy works alone supply an ample chart  
Of all the mountains, seas, and fertile plains,  
Within the compass of its wide domains.—  
Is there an Artist of the present day  
Untaught by thee to think, as well as play?  
Whose head thy science has not well supplied?  
Whose hand thy labours have not fortified?—

Old rules geographic soon were out of date,  
When the terrestrial sphere was found oblate:  
When wise Copernicus the orbs arrang'd,  
The system of Astronomy was chang'd:  
And now new laws of harmony are found,  
No treatise, code, or theory by pedants vain, (sic)  
Thy bold creative genius can restrain.  
Imagination, which, like garden bird,  
Was long forbid the skies, by rules absurd,  
Has now broke loose—now takes her airy flight  
To explore new worlds, and regions of delight.

Thy style has gain'd disciples, converts, friends,  
As far as Music's thrilling power extends.  
Nor has great Newton more to satisfaction  
Demonstrated the influence of Attraction.  
And though to Italy of right belong  
The undisputed sovereignty of Song,  
Yet ev'ry nation of the earth must now

(1) These verses have only of late years been made accessible in their entirety, in an appendix to the third volume of Pohl's *Joseph Haydn*, most authorities having hitherto satisfied themselves with even less than we quote here.

To Germany pre-eminence allow  
 For instrumental powers, unknown before  
 Thy happy flights had taught her sons to soar.

Welcome, great master! to our favour'd isle,  
 Already partial to thy name and style;  
 Long may thy fountain of invention run  
 In streams as rapid as it first begun;  
 While skill for each fantastic whim provides,  
 And certain science ev'ry current guides!  
 Oh, may thy days, from human suff'rings free,  
 Be blest with glory and felicity.  
 With full fruition, to a distant hour,  
 Of all thy magic and creative pow'r!  
 Blest in thyself, with rectitude of mind,  
 And blessing, with thy talents, all mankind!

But to turn to the question of the importance of Haydn's English visit to himself.

One may note at once that in coming to England Haydn was brought into a larger musical atmosphere than he could enjoy even at Vienna. And Vienna was not the place where Haydn had spent most of his life hitherto. Rather had he dwelt in comparative seclusion in the palaces of his patrons, the successive Princes of Esterhazy.

But even in Vienna, as has been said, there was not at this time the full, rich, *popular* musical life that existed in London. For London was then, as perhaps now, the very paradise of musicians of every sort. And the number of its concerts and of its musical societies, especially perhaps societies for vocal music, was almost legion.<sup>(2)</sup> Haydn, then, found in London large, expert and well paid orchestras; frequent opportunities for having his works performed (indeed, he could not turn out compositions quickly enough to satisfy the immediate demands upon him) and enthusiastic, wealthy and crowded audiences. This is shown by the fact that for his first benefit concert he was guaranteed £200, but he actually took £350, over two-thirds as much again.

Such opportunities and such encouragements could not fail to be without stimulus to his art. And, indeed, his biographer, Herr Hugo Botstiber, considers that his visits to London were of paramount importance in this connection.<sup>(3)</sup>

One might perhaps note also that it was just at this time that the reigning Prince Esterhazy had radically reduced the musical estab-

(2) cf. C. H. Pohl: *Haydn in London*.

(3) *Joseph Haydn*, vol. III, Leipzig. 1927 (a continuation of Pohl's first two volumes of his *Life of Haydn*).

ishment at his court, and had only retained sufficient players and singers to serve for the religious services of his private chapel, and for the martial music of his tiny army. The call to London came, therefore, rather as a godsend to Haydn. Though he had, as a matter of fact, the alternative of a visit to Naples.

Again, a second feature of his visits here was the fact that they supplied him with so much money. Haydn's receipts in England were such as largely to contribute to his continued physical well being for the rest of his days. For he made at least 24,000 gulden in England; *exclusive* of the honoraria for various compositions, and also of all that he gained by teaching. He was thus secure from the fate of Mozart.

A third important result of his English visits was Haydn's greater acquaintance with choral singing on a large scale,<sup>(4)</sup> and especially with the oratorios of the great Handel.

For in London these works could be performed as they were meant to be performed, and not, as Mozart had heard them, *dénaturés*—and foreshortened, so to speak—in such casual gatherings as could be collected at the house of Baron von Swieten. Haydn heard them, on the contrary, at the Handel festival in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of King George III himself; and at numerous other concerts where they were constantly performed.

In St. Paul's too, the massed singing of the Charity Children, as has so often been recounted, moved Haydn to almost unbelievable enthusiasm.

He gained in England, therefore, a far deeper interest in oratorio and in all choral music than he had had before. The result was 'The Creation'—a first draft of the libretto of which he took with him from London when he left in 1795—and later 'The Seasons.'<sup>(5)</sup> While even before he left England he had begun to write an oratorio on the subject of our sea power, the MS. of which is still preserved in the British Museum. But it remained unfinished.

Haydn also had great opportunities of studying opera in England. And, but for some unlucky chances in connection with the rivalry between the King's Theatre and Covent Garden, he would have been established as an official composer of opera in connection with the former.

Meanwhile, however, we find a number of miscellaneous works for

(4) The Emperor Joseph II had during his reign greatly restricted the performance of elaborate church music in Austria. Hence Haydn himself wrote no Masses between 1782 and 1796.

(5) In our opinion a still greater, and in any case much more typically, Haydnish work.

choral singing dating from his English visits; an 'Italian Catch' in seven parts, for instance; a chorus (very popular) called 'The Storm'; 'The Ten Commandments' arranged as canons for male voices; canons written for Lord Abingdon, and so on.

Actually, however, we might have had a great deal more in the way of choral works from Haydn but for unlucky circumstances. For he himself, writing to a friend and describing the success of 'The Storm,' regrets that he is unable to produce more of such works at his concerts, since the *Sängerknaben* (choristers) are engaged already to perform at other functions.

Choral singing, one may note, was also a feature of the 'Actus Publicus' <sup>(6)</sup> at Oxford at that time—a festivity at which Haydn received his degree in 1791. For not only the choirs of Oxford itself, but also others from St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and from Worcester Cathedral, and a crowd of famous soloists from London, together with orchestral players from the Italian opera, and from the Professional Concerts in London, added to the fullness and magnificence of these performances.

At the celebrations which Haydn attended in 1791, for instance, choruses were performed from 'The Messiah,' 'Acis and Galatea,' 'Israel in Egypt,' 'Alexander's Feast,' and 'Samson.' Indeed choral music and part-singing was then quite the rage in England. So much so, that even overtures were arranged in four parts; while one of the results of the enthusiasm for this form of music, combined with the popularity of Haydn himself, was the production by a gentleman called Gardiner of a whole oratorio entitled 'Judah,' composed entirely of arrangements of movements from Haydn's works!

At the same time Haydn's writing for solo voices received no small fillip from his London visits. For here he had Europe's greatest singers at his door; here he was besieged by talented amateurs; and the result was that he composed a very considerable number of songs and solo cantatas in England, as well as arranging sets of Scottish and Welsh airs for voice and piano, and some for voice, piano, violin, and violoncello.

English opinion concerning his powers as a writer of such solos may be illustrated by the following criticism of his cantata 'Ariana in Naxos' taken from *The Morning Chronicle*:—

The musical world is at this moment enraptured with a Composition which Haydn has brought forth, and which has produced effects bordering on all that Poets used to feign of the ancient lyre.

(6) The equivalent of the present Encænias.

Nothing is talked of—nothing is sought after but Haydn's Cantata. . . . It is written for the Harpsichord or Harp only, . . . and it was performed by Haydn himself, and sung by Pacchierotti. It abounds with such variety of dramatic modulations—and is so exquisitely captivating in its larmoyant passages, that it touches and dissolves the audience. They speak of it with rapturous recollection, and Haydn's Cantata will accordingly be the musical desideratum for the winter.

Probably the best known of all Haydn's songs, however, is the famous 'My mother bids me bind my hair,' written at this time as one of a set of canzonets.

We have now considered the main directions of the influence of Haydn's English visits upon his art. The greater freedom and expansion of his life here, compared to what he had been used to in Austria;<sup>(7)</sup> the opportunity of working with larger orchestras—the orchestra at Esterhazy numbered only sixteen to twenty-two all told, and had usually only two (or three) first violins, two violas, two double basses, and a single 'cello, whereas at his Salomon Concerts Haydn had at his disposal twelve to sixteen violins, four violas, three 'cellos, etc., and at his King's Theatre concerts in 1795 an orchestra of sixty; the closer acquaintance with massed choral singing, and especially with the works of Handel; the constant proximity of famous virtuosi, for whom London was a paradise at this time; immense popularity, and a constant demand for compositions; and finally, very considerable pecuniary advantages.

One may add a few general considerations. One may note how deeply Haydn appreciated the playing of English orchestras and how he observed upon one occasion 'dass er bei keiner Gelegenheit sein MS. Concerto (Symphony) so ausgezeichnet habe vorführen hören.' While inseparably connected with this subject comes the recollection of the immense enthusiasm his works aroused here and the *encores* to which individual movements were subjected. This custom indeed was not uncommon in the eighteenth century, and witnesses to the burning enthusiasm of the musical public then; an enthusiasm which quite disposes of the too common notion that an attitude of 'nil admirari,' and of a sort of serene indifference, was the chief characteristic of eighteenth century life. It was not;<sup>(8)</sup> and *encores* were common. *The Oracle* of March 10, 1794, for instance, writes of one of Haydn's symphonies: 'The second move-

(7) Pohl in his *Life*, vol. II, pp. 35-36, quotes Haydn as saying 'My only misfortune is my being kept in the country' (p. 35), and again 'It is melancholy to be always a slave.' Significant remarks, even if they do not indicate a permanent state of mind.

(8) As Lord David Cecil has eloquently shown in his life of Cowper, *The Stricken Deer*.



ment was repeated as usual—for Grace and Science what is like it? ' Again, at the first of all the Salomon Concerts, on March 11, 1791, the adagio of Haydn's new symphony had been repeated. At the third concert the first and last movements of another of the symphonies were repeated. At the first concert of Salomon's second series the same thing occurred. Such procedure was not at that time considered unmusical or bad form. And the frequent *encores* accorded to individual numbers of Mozart's operas in Prague and Vienna (sometimes a song would be repeated as often as three or four times) equally bear witness to the ampler and more generous musical atmosphere of that age.

Again, in this connection, Haydn's visits give us an idea of the length of concerts then; as well as of their frequency. For instance, when, in November, 1791, he stayed with the Duke of York at Oatlands, a concert composed entirely of Haydn's own works lasted from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m. And in 1795 we read of a concert at Carlton House at which the King and Queen were present. The august couple departed as early as 1.0—for George III was always of course a little *bourgeois*—but Lord Cholmondeley and other guests thought nothing of staying until 5.

But what, more specifically, was the content of all these performances? What works of Haydn were played at them? Of course, a great many of his symphonies, usually two at each concert. But other works in plenty, too: Quartets, of which he wrote six new ones at the time of his London visits; solo songs or cantatas; a few small choral works; the famous set of instrumental pieces depicting 'The Seven Words of Our Saviour from the Cross,' and including the famous earthquake piece, or *terremoto*; Scottish airs arranged for voice, piano, violin and violoncello (others for voice and piano only) of which Haydn set no fewer than 362 in all; concertos for various instruments (not only in D—and for the violoncello); overtures; and finally a number of *divertimenti* and other small instrumental works (for various combinations), similar to those of Mozart, but now even more neglected than his.

It is, by the way, sad to consider how few even of the symphonies are given in England to-day—people go on repeating merely three or four, such as the Oxford and the Paukenwirbel (*Ed*), neither of which is, in our opinion, so charming as several of the less known ones. As for the smaller instrumental works, they seem to be completely forgotten.

But at the Salomon Concerts in 1792, for instance, we hear of 'a Concertino for different instruments.' Again at the fourth

concert of Salomon's second set we read of a new M.S. 'Concertante for violin, 'cello, oboe and bassoon' (repeated by request at the fifth concert, at which no fewer than six works by Haydn were performed). On April 27, 1792, there was given a 'Divertimento for violins, two violas, oboe, flute, two horns and violoncello.' Again, on May 11, was played a new 'Divertimento, for two violins, oboe, flute, two violas, two horns, 'cello, and double-bass.' And yet again at the last Salomon Concert of this year a new 'Notturmo, for two violins, flutes, violas, horns, 'cello and bass.'—'Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?'

It is, however, very much a matter for regret that Haydn's works in this kind should be so much neglected, especially since a 'Divertissement for oboe, violin, viola da gamba, and bass,' recently published by the Oxford Press, from a MS. in the possession of Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch, has proved to be a particularly charming work. One knows indeed that a good many of Haydn's other such works have been published on the Continent. But not many of them seem to have crossed the channel.

It is, however, quite probable that many of these lesser works of Haydn, performed in England during his own visits and immediately afterwards, were given in private gatherings, as well as in public concerts. At any rate, his own musical and social activities during his stay were numerous. And we find him mixing with patrons and *conoscenti* not only in London, but in the country also. He visited Bath. He stayed with the Brassy's for five weeks, where he could have been seen wandering in the woods in the early mornings, studying an English grammar, and 'thinking of his Maker, his family and all his friends at home.' He also went to stay with a certain Sir Patrick Blake; visiting Cambridge at the same time. He stayed for a while at Slough with the astronomer Herschell; he stayed near Waverley and went over the ruins of the Abbey; he accompanied Lord Abingdon on a visit to a friend; and he was a considerable favourite with the various branches of the Royal family. He was invited by the King and Queen, indeed, to settle down for good at Windsor. He played at the court—the German songs, sung by himself, were particularly popular there—and he took part in the Prince of Wales's Concerts at Carlton House, and in the Duke of York's, at Oatlands and elsewhere.

At this time the Royal family, too, were the acknowledged leaders of the fashionable world of music. The King had done much in the direction of endowing and encouraging musicians. The Prince of Wales sang, and played the 'cello; the Duke of York was a keen patron; while Haydn also found in the newly-arrived Princess of Wales—

Caroline of Brunswick—and in the young Duchess of York, two talented and eager musicians who were already well acquainted with his music and who were delighted to play with him, or for him; to sing to his accompaniment; or to sit beside him, and hum over the tunes, as he conducted his works from the piano. One might add that the interest of the Prince of Wales in music is also shown by the fact that he definitely encouraged and promoted musical people, and that he maintained for a long time at Brighton a band of no less than seventy wind players, which cost him something like £1,000 a year.

Hoppner's famous portrait of Haydn—it now hangs in Buckingham Palace—bears a living testimony to this connection with the Royal family.

But indeed we hear of Haydn everywhere in London; at Ranelagh; at a banquet at the Lord Mayor's, with Pitt as the guest of honour; in barges on the Thames;<sup>(9)</sup> at private houses, such as that of Mrs. Blair in Portland Place, when 'that superb street, as usual, "outglared the moon with artificial light"'; while we even, at the end, hear of his works being performed at the 'Society for Ancient Music,' although by the rules of that society only the works of composers who had been dead for a specific number of years were eligible for performance. But Haydn was able to overcome everything, even the rules of an English club.

There was one house, however, at which Haydn found more than either patronage or friendship. It was the house of a certain Mrs. Schroeter, the widow of a pianoforte teacher and composer of good repute, who was now living at 6, James Street, Buckingham Gate. Here Haydn used to come to give pianoforte lessons; and here it was that before very long he discovered that she had fallen violently in love with him. Indeed, Haydn owned in later years that, had he not had a wife in Vienna (a wife, however, whom he had been known to describe as a 'bestia infernale,' and who was even now bothering him to buy her a new domain, in which she might be able to live comfortably as a widow), he would have gladly married the not unattractive Mrs. Schroeter. As it was, however, he could only dedicate to her some of the best of his pianoforte trios. But the following quotations are perhaps of interest as showing that Haydn's stay in England even included a romance. Writing on March 7, 1792, Mrs. Schroeter says:—

My Dear, I was extremely sorry to part with you so suddenly

<sup>(9)</sup> Where he tells us he was rowed along to the accompaniment of a *Feldmusik*. (One may compare Horace Walpole's: 'We marched to our barge, in which was a band of French horns.')

last Night, our conversation was particularly interesting and I had thousand affectionate things to say to you, my heart was and is full of tenderness for you, but no language can express half the Love and affectionation I feel for you, you are Dearer to me every Day of my life. I am very sorry I was so dull and stupid yesterday, indeed my Dearest it was nothing but my being indisposed with a cold occasion'd my stupidity. I thank you a thousand times for your concern for me. I am truly sensible of your goodness and I assure you my Dear if any thing had happened to trouble me, I would have open'd my heart. . . . Oh, how earnestly I wish to see you. I hope you will come to me to-morrow. I shall be happy to see you both in the morning—God bless you my love, my thoughts and best wishes ever accompany you and I always am with the most sincere and invariable Regard my Dear

your truly affectionate.

My Dearest I cannot be happy till I see you if you know, do tell me, when you will come.

In another letter she exclaims:—

I am just return'd from the Concert where I was very much charmed with your delightful and enchanting compositions, and your spirited and interesting performance of them. Accept then a thousand thanks for the great pleasure, I always receive from your incomparable Music. My Dear: I intreat you to inform me, how you do, and if you got any sleep to Night.

While elsewhere she writes:—

Be assured my Dear I partake with the most perfect Sympathy in alle your Sensations, and my regard for you is stronger every Day.

Her anxiety for his welfare appears, meanwhile, in the following:—

My Dear: I was extremely sorry to hear this morning that you was indisposed, I am told you was five hours at your Studys yesterday; indeed my D.L. I am afraid it will hurt you, why should you who have already produced so many wonderful and charming compositions, still fatigue yourself with Such close application? I almost tremble for your health. Let me prevail on you my muchloved Haydn not to keep to your studys so long at one time. My D. love if you could know how very precious your welfare is to me, I flatter myself you wou'd endeavor to preserve it, for my Sake as well as your own. Pray inform me how you do and how you have slept.

Again we read:—

Pray, my Dear Love inform me how you do? Every circumstance concerning you my beloved Haydn is interesting to me.

And once more she announces her love in no uncertain way when she writes:—

I feel for you the fondest and tenderest affection the human heart is capable of, and I ever am with the firmest attachment my Dear Love

most Sincerely, Faithfully and most affectionately yours

And this little incident seems to gain in interest from the fact

that it occurs in the life of a musician of whom Fétis' 'Biographie Universelle' truly says that 'peu d'existances d'artistes ont été aussi calmes, aussi uniformes, aussi réglées que celle de Haydn.'

One more incident in the social and artistic career of Haydn in England may perhaps be noted. We mean his visit to Oxford.

Through the influence of Dr. Burney, Haydn, as is well known, received the degree of Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*, at the 'Actus Publicus' in July, 1791. But in addition to this, Haydn was to have paid a more private and personal visit to Oxford, in the form of taking part in a concert at The Music Room, Holywell, in May of the same year. By some chance he was unable at the last minute to come. But the room in which he would have performed—'the oldest Music Room in Europe'—still stands to-day; and still preserves some of the features of an eighteenth-century building, with its high windows and curved apse-like end. At that time, however, the tin and wooden shanty (or passage-way) leading from the street to the original entrance, which itself stands about thirty-eight feet back from the pavement, had not been put up. Instead, there was a little stone court<sup>(10)</sup> in front of the building, approached through wrought iron gates. The Doric front, therefore, was not masked and marred as at present, but was fully visible as one approached it. While on either side of the main gateway (there were, and are, smaller gates at each side) was a pillar, bearing a coat of arms in stone. Inside, also, the room was not a little different from what it is to-day. For a species of gallery ran round three sides of it, leaving only the far end, where the performers played, free; and this accounts, doubtless, for the windows having been placed so high in the walls. From the roof meanwhile hung 'two very handsome lustres of cut glass' presented to the club by some local ladies. Such was the room in which Haydn was waited for in vain on May 18, 1791.

But in July the Sheldonian Theatre and all Oxford was really to see, and hear, him, when he finally made his appearance as the principal figure in the musical celebrations held in connection with the 'Actus Publicus' in accordance with the then prevailing custom. These celebrations were very considerable; and in this case, at any rate, consisted of three important concerts, of which the programmes have been preserved. All the resources of Oxford vocal music were enlisted for the occasion. But this was by no means all. For the choirs of London, Windsor, Lichfield, Worcester, and other centres likewise lent their aid; while the local orchestra was strongly reinforced

(10) 'A spacious court,' Dr. Hayes, the then Professor of Music calls it, 'guarded by a Pair of genteel Iron Gates in the Center, with Palisades to the right and left.'



with players from the Italian opera and from the Professional Concerts from London. Most of the famous instrumentalists of the day seem to have been playing on this occasion; even though the great Salomon himself is not mentioned. The chief singers of the London season were also engaged; including Kelly, who had sung for Mozart in the first performance of his 'Figaro,' and the famous Nancy Storace, who had also been one of Mozart's singers. The first of these great concerts was held on July 6, and the others followed on the two ensuing evenings; while the actual conferring of degrees, and other ceremonies of the Encænïa took place on the third morning, Friday, July 8.

It is perhaps interesting to note that between the reading of the Latin poems and other exercises, in those days short orchestral interludes were played to relieve the monotony. Meanwhile 'Proponente . . . Domino Vice-cancellario placuit venerabili coetui ut celeberrimus et in re musica peritissimus vir Josephus Haydn ad gradum Doctoris in Musica, honoris causa, admitteretur.'

The concert which was given in the Sheldonian Theatre on the 6th, consisted of three parts, the second of which opened with a symphony by Haydn. At this moment the composer appeared at the side of Dr. Hayes, the Professor of Music, and was greeted with loud applause.

The famous Oxford symphony, however, was played not at this concert, but at that of July 7, when it achieved an immense success. 'A more wonderful composition never was heard,' says *The Morning Chronicle*. 'The applause given to Haydn, who conducted this admirable effort of his genius, was enthusiastic; but the merit of the work, in the opinion of all musicians present, exceeded all praise.' We read also of an aria from 'Saul' being encored. While the concert lasted so long that there was a plan to shorten the latter part. The members of the University, however, would not hear of it.

Finally at the concert on the 8th, besides one of his symphonies, a cantata for solo soprano by Haydn was performed, which he himself accompanied. At this concert he appeared in his doctor's robes. *The Public Advertiser* tells us that 'The assembly was in excellent humour; and when Haydn appeared, and, grateful for the applause he received, seized hold of and displayed the gown he wore as a mark of the honour that had in the morning been conferred on him, the silent emphasis with which he thus expressed his feelings met with an unanimous and loud clapping.'

A brilliant audience of over 2,000 people attended this concert; several of its numbers were repeated, including Handel's chorus 'And

may no rash intruder'; and a profit of £500 was handed over as an honorarium to the conductor, Dr. Hayes, since the two first concerts alone had produced enough to defray the expenses of all three.

Haydn's visit to Oxford, then, was a brilliant success. And indeed he seems ever afterwards to have been highly proud of this honour. One may add that upon the monument erected to him in the Bergkirche at Eisenstadt, this also is accounted to him for greatness, that he was

AB AMPLISSIMA. SCIENTIARUM. UNIVERSITATE. OXONIENSI  
CREATUS. MUSICAE. ARTIS. DOCTOR.

Haydn's visit to England thus touched many sides of life. He was popular 'bei dem Volk' (people often came up to him, seized him by the hand and exclaimed 'You are a great man'); he was much sought after by the fashionable world; royalty smiled on him; and he was given a degree at Oxford. When he left England at the end of his second visit gifts were showered upon him; and among other things he was sent a number of pairs of stockings with the themes of some of his compositions worked into the wool. His connection with England was later, also, to be re-echoed, as it were, when he met Nelson at Esterhazy in 1799 and gave him the pen with which he was said to have written the famous 'Nelson' Mass.

In one of his letters to his father, Mozart had rejoiced over an English victory at Gibraltar, and had declared that he was, himself, an 'erz-Engländer' (an arch-Englishman, or arch-friend of England). The title perhaps might without exaggeration be also applied to Haydn. For Haydn had, in 1791, the choice of three countries to visit. He had received invitations from the King of Naples, from Prince Grassalkovics, and from Salomon: And he deliberately chose England.

Why? It has been conjectured that it was largely because this country was, as we have said, really a sort of paradise for musicians at that time. Here Haydn could breathe an ampler air; and as Dr. Karl Geiringer has remarked 'in Haydn's Geist setzt sich die Erkenntnis durch, dass sein Platz nicht länger an einem Fürstenhof ist.'

Certainly the results of his visit and the inspiration he received—especially through the influence of Handel's works—amply justified his choice. He seemed to renew his youth. The appreciation, the encouragement, that he found here spurred him on to inconceivable efforts, and to unimagined successes. So much so indeed, that Dr.

Hermann Abert somewhere says that it is really only the Haydn of the period following upon his setting out for England that the modern world knows at all. It was only in his old age that he discovered the secret of eternal youth.

That the England of the eighteenth century, then, to which, as Pohl has remarked, the words of Shakespeare in 'The Tempest' might well have been applied,

. . . the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not."

that this country—sometimes known in the nineteenth century as 'Das Land ohne Musik'—should have done so much to encourage and to inspire the genius of Haydn, is a fact worth remembering to-day, when something like a Renaissance is occurring in English music. Certainly the work and character of Haydn may be taken as a pattern by all who are in any way interested in that development. For perhaps no musician of any time has ever surpassed this great Austrian in being at once so original, so national, and so universal.

H. V. F. SOMERSET.

## MUZIO CLEMENTI

WHEN the young pianist, after a period of assiduous labour at the sonatas of Mozart, is promoted to those of Beethoven, he is at once impressed by the great differences that separate the piano works of these two nearly contemporary composers. It is not only that the sonatas of the later man are bigger, that their ideas are weightier and developed at greater length, and their structure more ample and more varied; the very use Beethoven makes of the instrument is different. He calls forth from it effects unknown to Mozart and utilises resources in it that lay unsuspected by his predecessor. It is as if the instrument itself were new, and yet it is not so; Mozart's sonatas, like the earliest of Beethoven's, were written for the 1780 piano, not for the harpsichord. And the contrast appears even greater when one realises that between Mozart's last two sonatas, which are pianistically as simple as his first, and Beethoven's earliest, there elapsed a space of but seven or eight years!

What is the reason for this chasm, in their pianistic character, between the two groups of works? Between Mozart's K.570 in 1790 and Beethoven's op. 2 in 1797, what has come about?

The answer is: Clementi—Clementi, who 'invented and elaborated, at one stroke and in its final shape, the new piano style destined henceforth to replace everywhere the old harpsichord style which still survived in the writing of even the most celebrated pianists of the time.'<sup>(1)</sup> His op. 2, published in 1773, startled the musical world and led to a rapid revolutionising of piano writing and piano playing, the earliest fruits of which most people know to-day are Beethoven's sonatas.

I am aware that this has been said before and can be found in most histories and dictionaries of music. The reason for saying it again—and a great deal more besides!—is that we are celebrating this year, or, alas, should be celebrating, the centenary of this forgotten composer's death. Amongst the manifold centenaries that grateful posterity is honouring, that of the father of piano playing is apt to

(1) Wyzewa: *Introduction to the Sénart edition of Clementi's sonatas.*

be overlooked, and it behoves those of us who know and love his music to pay him a tribute.

Were Clementi merely the revolutioniser of piano playing and piano composing, however important his place in history, I should not feel impelled to honour his centenary. But he is much more than that. He is, after Beethoven, the finest piano composer between 1790 and 1830. His best work leaves far behind it the sonatas of Weber; it surpasses some of Schubert's, and reaches the level of many of Beethoven's. Yet, inasmuch as this great name survives at all, it does so through the reputation of his sonatinas and *Gradus ad Parnassum*, which has completely wiped out the memory of his far grander sonatas and has 'condemned him to be considered solely as a "teacher," a "didactic composer," after the fashion of Cramer and Viotti.'<sup>(2)</sup>

Clementi's long life covers an important period in both political and musical history. He was born four years before Mozart and died five years after Beethoven. His earliest published music dates from 1772, his latest from 1826, and his work goes through a succession of changes almost as great as that of Beethoven. A Roman by birth, he was transplanted at the age of fourteen to the eccentric surroundings of Fonthill Abbey by Peter Beckford, and lived there till manhood. His first triumphs as a virtuoso were won in London, and, although on three occasions he made prolonged stays on the Continent, England remained his home. His second wife was an Englishwoman; it was in England that he spent the last twenty years of his life; he died at Evesham on March 10, 1832, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. An English family descended from him bears his name.

I cannot do more here than mention his success as a virtuoso, his efforts as an editor of earlier eighteenth century music, his partnership with Longman and Broderip as publisher, and his achievement as piano builder, at first with the same firm, then on his own account, and finally in partnership with others (Clementi, Collard, Davis and Collard—a name altered later to Clementi, Collard and Collard, and, after his death, to Collard and Collard). None of these activities have living interest to-day; if he survives at all, it is solely through his compositions, and to these we must now turn.

His sonatas, capriccios, toccatas, and other piano works number well over a hundred, of which more than fifty are still in print. The fecundity of the old composers is so well-known that it is hardly

(2) Wyzewa: *Id.*



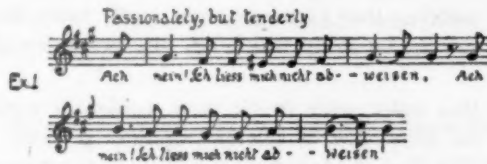
necessary to add that all of these are far from being of the same value. Like most musicians of his period, Clementi composed some of his works, as it were, 'for himself,' some 'for the public,' and some 'for himself and for the public.' The best belong to the first category; the second group is almost wholly uninteresting, except as a witness to the taste of the time; the third retains an intermittent vitality, charming on some pages, tedious on others. Almost all the sonatas of which I speak here, and all those on the strength of which his claim to greater attention is based, belong to the group of those he wrote 'for himself.'

If I wished to place before an audience a vision of Clementi as immediate and comprehensive as possible, I should play to it one of the three early sonatas in minor keys, op. 7, III, op. 8, I, both in G minor, or op. 14, III, in F minor. Not that the minor mode predominates in his work; only ten sonatas out of more than a hundred are in minor keys. But Clementi, like so many composers of the 1760-1830 period, not excluding Beethoven, put himself more whole-heartedly into his exceptional 'minor' works than into his numberless 'major' ones, and it is there that one finds him most fully and most quickly.

The predominant impressions one receives from a hearing of any one of these three sonatas are those of a crisply defined personality and of a passionate search for unity. His personality, as revealed in his music, is distinct from that of any other composer. The objection which is sometimes made to the study of secondary artists: 'Why waste time playing the kind of thing that Beethoven, or Bach, or Franck, did so very much better?' is invalid here. It is true that Beethoven learnt a great deal from him and wrote works not unlike Clementi's in structure and, many of them, greater than his. Clementi, nevertheless, fills a niche that is his alone.

His personality is intensely passionate and may seem to challenge comparison with those of his two greatest contemporaries. But passion is accompanied in him by more physical vigour than in Mozart; it is brusque and explosive, seldom constrained; it never broods just beneath the surface, ready to flash out for a brief 'dæmonic' instant. Its expression is less irascible than Beethoven's and assumes more readily a dramatic form; it is never without grace and plasticity, even in its brusquest and fieriest outbursts. For fleeting moments, he recalls both Mozart and Beethoven, but his personality is unlike either. Starting from opening subjects like those of the three sonatas mentioned, Mozart, mercurially, would have shown more contrast of mood in the course of the movement; Beethoven would have built up his

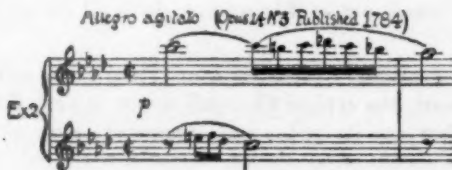
climaxes more gradually; Clementi advances like a whirlwind, flinging melodies right and left, but unchanging in mood. Look at these opening bars:



Mohr (!)  
2<sup>o</sup> Vol. XIII  
No. 4.

Their passion is that of some exiled fire-god, seeking far and wide readmittance to the skies. Nothing more personal could be imagined, nothing that was less of an inferior version of another composer.

The search for unity is an essential part of his personality. There are at work in him disruptive forces which he strives hard to overcome. Sometimes, these forces triumph and prevent him from achieving a consistent whole, and as a result we have sonatas that contain beautiful passages, but are unsatisfying, anthologies, not single works. But in the three I have chosen as an introduction, he keeps these forces in order by means of strict thematic and rhythmic unity. Thus, in the F minor, op. 14, III, the principal melodic and rhythmic elements of the whole first movement are contained in the opening bar.



The left-hand figure, inverted, forms the stark subject of the *largo*, as desolate and barren as a sun-swept desert of rock in southern Europe.



The same motif constitutes the generating theme of the *presto*, which, like the first movement, is derived from the material contained in its

opening bars. The result is a sonata as closely welded in all its parts as any of Beethoven's. I avoid calling Clementi a 'forerunner' of Beethoven, since the title implies that the 'forerunner' is interesting chiefly in the light of the great man 'forerun,' but one cannot help noticing that Clementi alone could teach Beethoven to satisfy that craving for unity which he, too, brought with him into music.

One finds this strict unity in his most passionate works. Where one expects the freest flow of emotion, there is precisely the closest control by the intellect, harbouring every little motif and transforming it with utmost skill to be used up afresh further on. This control is much looser in the sonatas where the emotional flame burns low. His mastery of organic unity is at its height in op. 34, II, in G minor, where the whole of the long first movement is based on two or three figures of a few notes each. But it is found, to a lesser degree, in most of his sonatas, and it occurs also in his rondos.

It has sometimes been said of Beethoven that the unity of his compositions and his economic methods of development are due to his lack of melodic invention. Inadequate as this explanation is with Beethoven, it would be even more so with Clementi. What is so admirable in the three sonatas I have mentioned and, in general, throughout his best work, is the melodic character of his themes and their abundance, and this feature constitutes, with organic unity, his most obvious characteristic. At a period when the aim of every composer was to be tuneful and the *cantabile* style of playing was fashionable, he stands out in this respect above all his contemporaries except Mozart.

But, despite occasional 'Mozartianisms,' and a few sonatas clearly inspired by Mozart, the typical Clementi theme is very different from Mozart's. It has not its poise and symmetry, nor, as a rule, its elegance. It is short, often abrupt, sometimes rugged; it combines breadth and conciseness;



above all, it has a dramatic quality that seems to call for words. His most original themes possess an almost physical personality; they conjure up a vision of characters on a stage; they sound like voices,

and, at times, like voices that speak rather than sing. This impulse towards speech drives him, in three of his most individual sonatas, to give the slow movement the form of a recitative, and the great capriccio in E minor, op. 47, I, one of his latest works, also begins with a recitative. The following example will show clearly this spoken character.



A closely knit structure and dramatic themes give to his eight or ten greatest sonatas a startling personality. When the explorer of musical byways lights upon one of them, he wonders how they can ever have fallen into neglect.

In their broad lines, Clementi's sonatas follow the patterns of the day, but in his first and second movements, his quest for unity leads him to take liberties. His most important works conform no more closely to the hypothetic 'classical' mould than do those of Beethoven. In many of them, there is a series of subjects, not two, but three or four in number, all so closely akin as to be but variants of the same motif. In the two G minor sonatas, op. 7 and 8, 'development' and 'recapitulation' are so closely welded that it is impossible to say where one ends and the other begins. In op. 7, the last section appears to start with the key of E flat major and a motif that had been first heard, in B flat, about half-way through the exposition. The first subject returns later only and leads at once to a passage which had formed the coda to the exposition and which, much extended, fulfils the same function now. In op. 8, the development continues without a break to within thirty-four bars from the end, when a half-close occurs. The first subject follows, shortened, and is at once swallowed up in a fiery succession of scales and arpeggios which conclude the work abruptly.

The first subject often returns in another key than the tonic. In many sonatas, it appears in the subdominant—a conservative feature rather than an innovation. In the F minor sonata, it does so (B flat minor), but modulates at once to C minor, in which key the recapitulation starts. Not till the second subject has appeared in A flat major,

as in the exposition, and modulated at once to F minor, is the tonic reached, that is, when the recapitulation is more than half over.

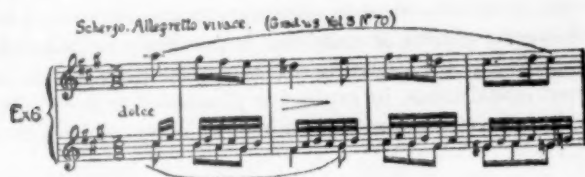
Clementi's slow movements are in every way the equal of his *allegros*. It is in an *adagio* that a composer shows his mettle and Clementi comes through this test of greatness with success. Three of his slow movements, as we have seen, are recitatives, and one of them, op. 40, II, composed about 1795, introduces, *lento*, the theme of the finale. Others, without being actual recitatives, have the conciseness and pungency which characterise that form, *e.g.*, the *lento e patetico* in C minor of the C major sonata, op. 9, II. But most of them are on a larger scale, and hardly any two of the more important ones are built on the same pattern. On the whole, some sort of binary structure is used, with or without double-bars, the second half being rather longer than the first and combining the functions of development and recapitulation. In the late D minor sonata, op. 50, II, the twofold plan is still visible, but the two halves are so merged that it is impossible to find a dividing point. In the 'Dido abandoned' sonata, op. 50, III, the *adagio dolente* is entirely rhapsodic. On the other hand, in a few works, Clementi has cast his slow movements in a rigid mould. As a whole, the variety of their form is very great, and their emotional significance is as varied as their form.

His finales are seldom equal to his other movements. They are seldom as ambitious, in any case, and, even within their straiter limits, they are not often as successful. The best belong to the minor key works and, with one exception, are in sonata form. It is difficult to make a selection between these eight or nine first-rate finales, but possibly those of op. 34, II, in G minor, and op. 40, II, in B minor, are the most satisfying; in form, at any rate, the latter, with the return in the middle of the recitative subject of the largo, is most original. In his more trifling finales, his favourite form is the rondo. A number of his rondos are sparkling with wit or amusing for the picturesque effects of yodelling and bagpipes which were popular in 1790, but few are of permanent interest. It was the sonata form and the *largo* that called forth his structural skill; we find nothing in him that recalls the spacious sonata-rondos of Mozart. Yet even in these evanescent sparkles his passion for unity pursues him, and many of his rondos draw their episodes from slight modifications of the refrain. Nevertheless, here, he points to the future less decidedly than elsewhere.

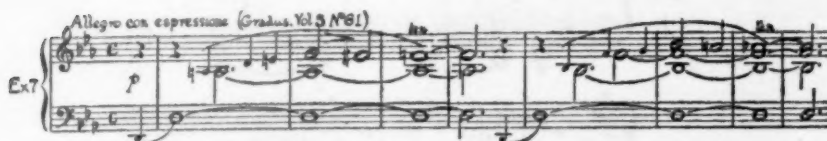
Whether or not that in itself is a disadvantage is a matter for debate, but it is a fact that as one explores his sonatas, associations and reminiscences widen the horizon continually. From Scarlatti,



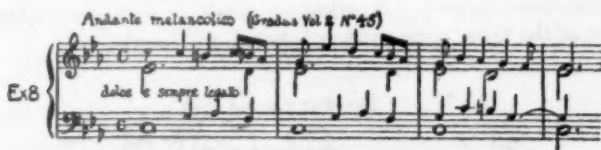
Bach and Johann Schöbert, on whom, in unequal degree, his early work is based, and whom he now and again recalls,<sup>(3)</sup> it extends to Mozart and Haydn, and thence to Beethoven, whom almost every significant work of his seems to herald. But it stretches further. The late third volume of the *Gradus*, published in 1826, is full of Mendelssohn and Schumann;



Wagner is present more than once;



Brahms's op. 1 is announced in his sonata op. 50, I, and the meditative spirit of César Franck broods over the prelude No. 45 of the second volume of the *Gradus*.



Can it be said that such multiple contracts with composers yet unborn detract from his originality? Rather is it a sign of his fruitfulness, that in his store there should lie half-concealed so much that awaited full expression; rather is it a witness to his vision, that he should foresee the paths music was to tread during the half-century that followed his death.

I have refused to look upon Clementi as a forerunner; his best work

(3) Scarlatti, in op. 26, III, in F sharp minor; Bach, in op. 8, I, finale; Schöbert, in op. 5, III, in E flat; the first movement contains a familiar Schobertian phrase.

may stand on its own merits. Yet his kinship with Beethoven no study of him can omit to mention. Beethoven's keyboard music owes more to him than to Mozart, Haydn, or Philip-Emmanuel Bach, and his familiarity with Clementi's works is the chief reason that his early piano compositions are, in point of style, in advance on his chamber and orchestral music. We know from Schindler his affection for Clementi's sonatas, which he preferred to Mozart's. The kinship lies deeper than mere coincidences, numerous though they be; it is in the almost desperate pursuit of unity that both composers undertake from the beginning; in the dramatic use of unison passages, in sudden, unexpected modulations, in expressive silences—not just 'surprises,' but tragic pauses charged with meaning—in heavy, sinister chords,



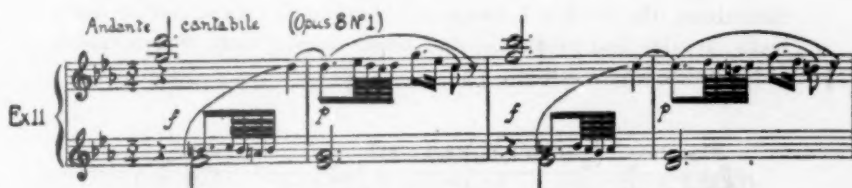
in broad *largo* themes. It expresses itself in pianistic features like the use of the bass, wide spacing between the hands,



rapid changes of register (cf. Ex. 1) and the carrying over to the keyboard of effects belonging to organ, quartet and orchestra. In all this Clementi and Beethoven are alike, and the priority in every case is Clementi's. It is true that he outlived Beethoven, but from 1795 to about 1811, he ceased writing for the piano and gave himself up exclusively to the composition of numerous symphonies which,

performed repeatedly with success at London concerts from 1786 to 1828, were later destroyed by him, for reasons we do not know.<sup>(4)</sup> Between 1811 and 1820, it is true, he composed the five numbers of op. 47 and 50, as well as the later ones of the *Gradus*; nevertheless these works show no influence of Beethoven, and the *Gradus*, which is pregnant with Mendelssohn, Schumann and Wagner, is hardly ever reminiscent of the Bonn master.

There are some characteristics which he does not share with Beethoven. One of these is a taste for incomplete harmonies, which give a stark, weird impression that is highly significant, though sometimes rather unpleasant.



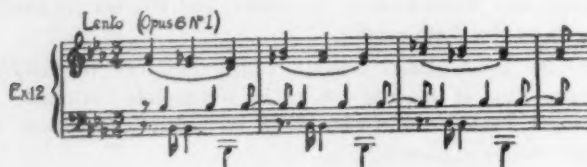
Another, that does not appear till after 1788, is the importance given to canon. Clementi is, with Franck, the only composer of note who has made a consistent and expressive use of this device. Canons occur in at least fifteen of his movements. Some last but a few bars, others form the substance of a whole movement, like the *allegretto* of op. 39, III, and the minuet of op. 40, I, in G. The first movement of the great G minor sonata, op. 34, begins its recapitulation in canon, a device, already found in Philip-Emmanuel, which in Clementi's hands announces the Ninth Symphony and that of Franck. The *Gradus* also contains many pieces of canon. The gem of all these is the delicate major section in the *adagio* of op. 50, No. 1, in A.<sup>(5)</sup>

In point of rhythm, too, Clementi differs from Beethoven. His rhythms are not more forceful, none could be, but they are more complex. The triangular and four-square measures of 'galant' music are not common in him. The long *lento* introduction of his capriccio op. 47, II, in C (which leads to an *allegro* in B minor!) is in 5/4 time.

(4) Two early symphonies were printed by Longman and Broderip as op. 18 in 1787, and, according to his pupil Ludwig Berger, the fine sonata op. 34, II, is the arrangement of a symphony. Apart from these, the British Museum and, especially, the Library of Congress, contain manuscript sketches for symphonic movements, in varying degrees of completeness, which still await thorough investigation.

(5) The fugues of the *Gradus*, vols. ii and iii, show him to have been a consummate master of counterpoint. The C minor (vol. ii, 45) and B flat fugues (vol. iii, 57) are particularly grand.

But it is not only that his rhythms are varied. They are also contrasted. The first movement of the F minor sonata is built up entirely on contrast of rhythm. Sometimes he combines as many as three different rhythms.



Sometimes, the conflict between the rhythms is sharp, setting one's teeth on edge and producing that acrid, rasping taste that so much of his music leaves behind.



The music lover who will consent for a moment to leave the beaten track and, under the guidance of a Wyzewa, share Clementi's bread and salt, will not regret the hours given to him. Admittedly, taken as a whole, he is not of the greatest; he has passion and resource, but he lacks too often breadth and staying-power. Nevertheless, if he himself be not of the first order, some eight or ten of his sonatas emphatically are; they possess a youth as perennial as the best of the great composer who learnt from him. It is for their sake, and for the beauties hidden in his lesser works, that I make, in this his centenary year, my 'Oratio pro Clemente.'

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*Bibliographical Note.*—Most histories of piano music deal at some length with Clementi; Shedlock's well-known 'Pianoforte Sonata' contains the best study of him in English. The only book devoted to his life and work as a whole is G. C. Paribeni's *Muzio Clementi nella vita e nell'arte* (Milan, 1921). The capital question of his relationship to Beethoven is dealt with in a recent publication: A. Stauch's

*Clementi's Klaviersonaten im Verhältnis zu den Klaviersonaten von Mozart, Haydn und Beethoven* (Obercassel bei Bonn, 1930).

No complete edition of his works is at present obtainable. Peters, Universal and Litolf, among others, publish an abundant selection, Litolf publishing the sonatas separately. But they all mix the chaff with the grain. The only satisfactory edition is that of twenty sonatas, edited with scholarly love by the late T. de Wyzewa, who has added a biographical notice and comments on each work, and published in two volumes by Sénart, Paris. Wyzewa made his choice with affectionate care and included in it all that is best, with the surprising exception of the 'Didone abbandonata.' The pianist who possesses this edition and adds to it the 'Dido' sonata (in, say, Litolf, where it can be had separately) and the third volume of the *Gradus*, will own all that is best, though not all that is of value, in Clementi.

C. M. GIRDLESTONE.



## THE SYMBOLISTS AND DEBUSSY

### THE SYMBOLISTS

It all began, they say, with Baudelaire. But not the Baudelaire who thrilled the shocked Victorians with his exciting descriptions of the indescribable! The most noticeable aspect of the Symbolists' work seems to be a mistrust, a hate even, of brute Nature. It was this that they learned from Baudelaire. The stark hills must be hidden, the waving trees clipped, women bejewelled and powdered. Unchanged Nature, love, wine, or social distresses had been the poets' theme for too long. The vulgar full-bloodedness of Hugo filled them with loathing and apprehension for the future of poetry. Like pious monks, they fled from the world, turned to their coloured manuscripts and dreamed their philosophic dreams. It was not a revolt, but just an uncourageous gesture. The typical Symbolist is Stéphane Mallarmé. He borrowed his interests until he became a one-subject poet; and that subject is also typical and worthy of investigation.

He saw the verse produced around him as a disgusting echo of the beauty he dreamed of—an ideal union of Love and Verse, two in one and one in two, indivisible. This mystical union was Mallarmé's creed, his religion; not a mere philosophy, but a dogma to live by and fervently love. To discuss such an idea in the ordinary way would seem ridiculous or obscure, as Mallarmé indeed found. He therefore invented a new technique which would explain to a sympathetic reader some of the more obvious points in his creed. That technique is called Symbolism. But it is essential to realise that even by symbols logical expression is often impossible. Mallarmé, however, faced that difficulty, and, being certain that feeling counts for more than reason, was content to be logically obscure. This obscurity has made many a willing reader lose patience with these incomprehensible poems. It must be made quite clear, nevertheless, that there is nothing obscure about the creed itself, as we have called it. Mallarmé was convinced of the ultimate truth of the ideal towards which he felt an uplift of feeling, worship, call it what you will. The obscurity, when there is any, is in the expression of his feelings, not in those feelings themselves. We can thus study these ideas more conveniently by considering the Symbolic expression of them.

In the poem called 'Windows,' a poor dying man looks out of the hospital windows, 'clamorous for the azure-blue' of the skies. Azure is a frequent symbol for the poetic ideal, a perfect fusion of Love and Verse. It is the only beauty left to a poet forced to live in this world and 'disgusted with man and his soul of adamant, drunk with lucre, the object of the only appetites he has.' Like the poor wretch in the hospital, 'I flee,' says the poet, 'to the windows, and washed with the eternal dews which the pure Infinite morning gilds, I see my reflection, an angel! I die, and love—the window is Art and the mystic sense—to be reborn, wearing my dream as a diadem, taking it to anterior skies where Beauty is!'

But the Azure, the Infinite morning, the anterior skies do not welcome the stranger poet. In 'Azure,' a typical poem, we find the following beginning:—

The calm irony of the eternal azure-blue, indolently beautiful  
as flowers, heaps sorrow on the impotent poet as he curses his  
talent across a barren wilderness.

He calls upon the mists of monotony to protect him from the calm irony. But in vain does Ennui bring mud to stop up the holes made by the flying birds—an extraordinary symbol for poems proceeding from the azure ideal and breaking the dullness of the poet's life; in vain does he call on the factory chimneys—another simile—to blot out the sky with soot:—

The Azure-blue is victor. It rolls piercing into the mists,  
eternal, and passes through the poet's naïf agony like a swift  
sword. Where can I flee in my perverse and useless revolt?  
Haunted I am—with the Azure-blue!

Why should the poet flee from the irony of the skies? Because, though he longs for the azure ideal, he has realised how futile it is to try to express his feelings in any adequate way.

Mallarmé makes many allusions to the difficulties of writing. He worked hard to obtain the perfect command of words which he needed. The word was his unit of thought and expression, just as the sentence is of other poets. He exalted the word with all its magic, made it so all-important that he became scrupulous to a degree and finally impotent. Eloquence and rhetoric in the old sense he eschewed; this too helped to make it impossible for him to write at all. He felt the urge to write, but his unreasonable self-criticism refused to allow the urge to issue in a poem: he invested words with such unusual associations, with such a pregnant magic, that he became powerless to deal with them. They were fallen angels, laid low by their own might.

These ideas may be compared in passing with those of Stravinsky,

who in some of his works has clothed the musical 'interval' with a similar significance, a rather arbitrary trapping of external meaning, by which the whole work, once explained by a person 'in the secret,' becomes a moment-by-moment commentary of the story which is being illustrated: a kind of minute programme music.

There can be no doubt that there is something amateurish in these ideas; a child-like zeal for all-embracing epithets, expansive visions, ideals which seem too obviously unattainable—for an ideal should always look attainable! The Symbolists were the antithesis of the professional journalists: they sought to please themselves rather than the reader.

The French set much store by an accurate phrase: Racine is preferred to Corneille because he contains no obscurities; the proud central tower to the temple of French Literature—Voltaire—stands stark and bright in the clear sunlight of logic. But see Verlaine's confession of faith:—

'Tis music first that you must find;  
No shapely form be there to bind  
To earth your songs serene and rare,  
Vague dreams that melt into the air.

When you your word and phrase select,  
In choosing, calm disdain affect;  
Gray songs of mist are sweetly fine  
Where Truth and tremulous Dreams combine.

—Like lambent eye half hid from sight,  
Like the rude quivering noon-tide light,  
Or like the cooling autumn skies  
Whose blue with star-points dotted lies—

'Tis Shadow vague the poet aids,  
Not blatant Colours, naught but Shades;  
Shades reconcile (his only need)  
Dreams to a dream and flute to reed.

\* \* \* \* \*

For music still we seek and strive:  
The vision thought, the fugitive  
Must be your song, that soars above  
To newer skies and higher love.

Your song be the fresh breeze of morn  
That dallying wanders at the dawn,  
'Mid scented mint and flowering thyme—  
All else is then but bookish rhyme!

And so his finest verse tells of the sobbing of violins, or the sad plash of fountains in old-world gardens. And they are but the symbol and occasion of those curiously unreal thoughts that hover in our mind when we see them. Music alone seems to be able to rouse the feeling they give, but the attentive reader of Verlaine will know how unaccountably his jewelled verse can reawaken the sleeping

memory of a patient sundial, or the half-swooning recollection of a scented fan. In choosing such themes, the Symbolists thought they were freeing themselves from the constraints of the Romantics. But their freedom was bounded by stricter limits which forbade the introduction of more 'human' subjects.

A similar freedom was claimed in technique. Experiments were made with small technicalities like the *césura* and the *hiatus*, and many poets sought to sing in free verse. There is little that is very startling in a piece of free verse in English; though it looks free on paper, it rarely sounds so; the metre underlying it is too evident. In French verse, stress in the English sense is unknown. The basic principle is syllable-counting: the hearer feels that a number of equally stressed syllables has been heard and expects a balancing number to follow. Rhyme, therefore, is important in allowing him to sense where the lines end. In English verse rhyme is an ornament. In French, an essential so necessary that blank verse, except as an experiment, is unknown. Free verse in French is thus dependent on distinctive rhymes and a sense-phrase which ends with the line. If run-on lines are used, it is necessary to employ double or triple rhymes, otherwise the poem will not sound like verse at all. A French poem in free verse must frequently sound artificial and laboured; the difficulties of writing a good one leave little freedom to the free verse poet.

In construction, the Symbolists eschewed logic. The method of building any poem which was not mere narrative was the cinema method, the method of juxtaposition. One feeling gained in significance and effect from being followed immediately by a second. But there need be no logical connection; the connection was entirely emotional.

Symbolist verse, then, is a peculiarly un-French product. Obscure in its sense, ultra-musical in its utterance, and often richly rhymed, it seems a hybrid and caused much consternation to the critics who reviewed the first sumptuous editions. Hence the violent antipathy which the Symbolist poets have always encountered. It must be admitted that Rimbaud, who is considered the first of the school, Verlaine, the sweetest singer, and Mallarmé, certainly the most presuming, expected too complete a readjustment in the reader who could yet find pleasure in Leconte de Lisle and Baudelaire. The later poets like Laforgue, Viélé-Griffin, and the rest down to Paul Valéry, all of whom are tainted with the Symbolist originality, are no better appreciated.

It is impossible as yet to decide what relation this new verse will

have with the long tradition from Villon to Hugo. French literature can show examples of similar apparent side-trackings—Rabelais, perhaps La Fontaine, certainly Saint-Simon. Considered absolutely, the Symbolists can show a delicate hot-house growth of exotic blooms like orchids and nenuphars. They repay reading with enjoyment, if such a bluff term may be used for the winsome pleasure they can give.

CLAUDE ACHILLE DEBUSSY, 1862-1918

Among the artist habitués of the famous Tuesday poetic gatherings held by Mallarmé in the Rue de Rome was a young man whose musical ideas were to colour the whole of recent writing. Debussy's career can be sketched in very few words. He was of a bourgeois family, and owing to the interest taken in him by the mother-in-law of Verlaine, was sent to the Conservatoire in Paris, where he worked for ten years, acquiring in 1884—the date of Mallarmé's rise to fame—the coveted Prix de Rome. There was nothing of the amateur about the technique of Debussy; though, the scholarship once gained, he displeased his former masters by what seemed to them his nebulous writing. One of the exercises sent to Paris from the Villa de Medici was definitely not accepted by his tutors; upon which Debussy settled down in Paris as a professional composer, eking out what must have been a scanty income with some provocative journalistic work, which furnishes us with much useful data about his attitude to music.

The rest of Debussy's life is told by the series of masterpieces which he created between that time and about 1910. He appeared seldom before the public either as pianist or conductor, though he came twice to England—in 1908 and 1909—and conducted the Queen's Hall Orchestra through his 'Faun's Afternoon' and the 'Nocturnes.' Between 1910 and his death on March 26th, 1918, he wrote little that matters, and suffered much through ill-health. Perhaps a rather ignominious end, and comparable in an ominous way with that of Mallarmé: which seems to suggest that impressionism and longevity are incompatibles!

Between 1887, when he returned from Rome, and 1899, all the important orchestral works were written. Two of these, together with the Baudelaire songs and the string quartet, established his reputation as a composer with not only something to say, but what seemed to his contemporaries a revolutionary way of saying it; these works, the 'Faun's Afternoon' and the 'Three Nocturnes,' are by now popular favourites. To a careful student there is little that seems revolutionary to-day in their technique. They show obvious links with the French tradition, but differed from the usual compositions



of the day in this: Debussy conscientiously abhorred German ideas of 'symphonic development,' a technical phrase indicating the method of building a work which had been used by Haydn and Mozart, enlarged and enriched by Beethoven, and by Wagner used for dramatic ends. None of Debussy's work shows the logicity we expect in a Beethoven symphony, or even the magic fusion of musical development and 'programme' which is the key to the esthetic of Richard Strauss. To reject the influence of Wagner was indeed in those days to court unpopularity, a serious matter to a professional composer. Debussy cannot be accused, however, of lack of courage.

What had Debussy to put in the place of German logical methods?

It was music 'au grand air,' the music of open landscapes and free-mindedness, far removed from what he calls 'parasitic esthetic doctrines,' or the music of the schools. He is due, for example, one fine Sunday afternoon to report on a concert where Nikisch is conducting. A concert by Nikisch on such an afternoon as that, with the blue heavens and the hot sun calling him? Impossible! He is soon leagues away from it all:—

Far removed the discussions on art; amid this peace the names of great men take on them a semblance of swearing and bad taste. Forgotten the petty artificial feverishness of first nights; I was alone, delighting in my own disinterestedness; never have I loved music more than at these moments, when I never heard it mentioned. It appeared in all its totality of beauty, no longer in little symphonic snippets, with their cramping hothouse atmosphere.

He dreams of an art which is like Nature herself, an art which cannot be exploited by the musical artisan—an all-embracing open-air music, lacking schools and traditions, which shall move the whole world:—

Music is a totality of diffuse forces. . . . We have made a theorised song of it! I prefer the few notes of an Egyptian shepherd's pipe; he is at one with the landscape and hears harmonies unknown to our text-books. . . . Musicians listen to music written down by skilful hands, never to that inscribed in nature. To gaze at the dawn has more effect than to hear the Pastoral Symphony.

And again:—

I dream of festivals held in the open, where a large orchestra would be needed, together with human voices (no—not a Choral Society, thank you!). I get a glimpse of the possibility of music made for the open air, constructed on a grand scale, with eloquent vocal and instrumental effects, which would vibrate in the freedom of the breezes and hover joyously above the timber-tops. Such a succession of chords would seem unusual inside a shut-in concert hall, but would be heard at its true value in the open. . . . Perhaps we should thus find the means of doing away with all petty ideas of form and traditional clear-cut tonality which so clumsily encumber our music. The art of to-day would thus be

renewed and learn lessons of beauty and freedom to be found in the growth of trees. . . .

There would be a mysterious communion of music with the winds, the quivering of leaves, the scent of flowers; and the music would bind all these elements into such a natural blend that it would seem to be part of each. . . .

Mere verbiage perhaps, but it is the keynote of all Debussy's music; if you feel no sympathy with these expansive ideas, you can have none with the music of the man who dreamed them. This pervading feeling of open-airness is found in all his orchestral music, which also shows the simplicity of utterance that denotes genius. That is no small attainment when a composer seeks to express such impalpable ideas as 'A Faun's Afternoon,' or 'Clouds,' or even 'Homage to Samuel Pickwick Esq., P.P., M.P.C.'

As much can be claimed for the piano pieces. The early 'Arabesques' and the 'Bergomask Suite,' which contains the well-known 'Clair de Lune,' are rightly popular for their directness of style, but the true Debussy is to be found in the three collections entitled 'Estampes' ('Engravings'), containing the famous 'Gardens in the Rain' and the 'Granada Evening,' 'Images' (two books) and 'Préludes' (two books), all written between 1903 and 1910. There are in these collections about forty pieces for the piano, models of effective writing for the instrument and perfectly expressing the idea they set out to put before the audience. To achieve both these aims is almost unique in the history of music. Beethoven could express himself with force and clarity, but never learnt how to treat the modern piano. Liszt is perhaps the most apposite example of the contrary. Chopin and Debussy alone have managed to express worthy thoughts in true pianistic idiom. It is all no doubt a matter of choosing the idea which is of a type that can be expressed adequately on a piano. Debussy has not only done this, but can always work out his idea into the technically exquisite miniatures which all his piano pieces are. To appraise them more fully would be to go into unnecessary raptures over perfection.

As a further insight into the mind and music of Debussy, it is interesting to give the titles of the piano pieces in the first book of the 'Préludes':—

1. Dancers at Delphos.
2. Sails.
3. The Wind on the Plain.
4. 'Sounds and perfumes hover in the night air . . .'
5. The Hills of Anacapri.
6. Footmarks in the Snow.
7. What the West Wind Saw.
8. The Maid with Flaxen Hair.

9. The Broken Serenade.
10. The Abbey 'neath the Waves.
11. Puck's Dance.
12. Nigger Minstrels.

Compare these titles with the authors of the three libretti used by Debussy for his vocal works. They are Rosetti, 'The Blessed Damozel,' Maeterlinck, 'Pelleas and Melisanda,' and D'Annunzio, 'The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian.'

It is difficult to imagine any language more musical than that of these libretti; their limp exotic style hardly calls for a musical setting to aid its message. In 'Pelleas' Debussy solved with talented ease the problem he set himself. All melody—'tuneyness' is composers' slang for what is meant—is rejected, all rhetoric in the Italian style excluded, and in its place Debussy has made the inflections of speech the mainspring of the vocal line which floats lovingly on an under-current of murmuring accompaniment. No high lights, no impassioned moments, but a sensuous counterpart to the indescribable atmosphere in which the play works out its sad story.

No one had attempted to set such words before, few have tried since. Debussy, as always, considered and solved the problem in his own way. The result in 'Pelleas' is moving and original. It could not have been written before 'Tristan,' but it is no less unique for that. It shows the same directness and simplicity, the same rejection of Teutonic methods. It has been called impressionistic. Such a term can lead the thinking mind astray; expressionistic would be as accurate a description. What matters to us is that the music is a worthy companion to the fine libretto it is illustrating.

#### COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS

Later historians will be able to show with more truth and completeness the connection of ideas in the work of Manet, the painter, Mallarmé, the poet, and Debussy, the musician. It must here suffice to show some of the affinities, without prophesying as to future verdicts.

As Frenchmen, the Symbolists sought to express ideas which had been neglected by French literature—the vague, the sentimental even, though they would have repudiated the second charge. Considered as French music, the music of Debussy shows the influence of Massenet, his tutor, in the vocal works, and that of the eighteenth century clavichordists in the works for the keyboard; not of Lulli, for Debussy would have none of him—was he not a foreigner like Gluck, distilling Italian poison into the clear French waters?—but of Couperin and Rameau, whose neat harpsichord 'Lessons' much resemble the 'Préludes' of Debussy, with their lightness of

touch, their 'programme' and their deft virtuosity. Debussy is clearly in the tradition, and will be a 'classic' when the Symbolists are remembered, perhaps, as a clique of cranks.

It should be noticed that all the artists of this time spoke strongly against professional theories; Debussy is especially outspoken about the professional musician, who is, it seems, a cross between 'an ape and a domestic servant.' He calls the symphony as taught in the schools an 'established form, one might even say administrative.' Debussy, however, was a clever master of his technique, and by the professional meant what has been called the 'bread-and-butter man.' No one was more professional than Debussy in the sense that he was a product of the Schools, and thus brought up in the long line of French musicians.

The poets strove to make their verse into music, while Debussy sought to 'literate' his work. The verse of Verlaine and Mallarmé is always sheer beautiful sound; and it could thus better express the vagueness, from an intellectual point of view, which had been the charm of music alone. Debussy gives suggestive titles, always refined in expression—they are frequently a line from a contemporary poet—and always apt. Verlaine can be appreciated only by one who has loved music: Debussy yields his finest joys to those who know the literary aspirations of his age.

Perhaps one may be forgiven a short digression on this fascinating marchland between music and literature, for both the Symbolists and Debussy have allowed us more than any other artists to view this promised land.

What is the 'condition of music' which Pater finds to be the goal of all the arts?

Instrumental or wordless music expresses best what words cannot. In a Beethoven symphony, for example, the facts expressed are somewhat as follows. Two or three emotional states in us, caused by the ordered noise we hear—how and why it seems impossible to know—are woven into a pattern in time. The pattern pleases us because it is true; that is, it always happens thus ideally, worldly interruptions apart. Thus, after a climax of speed and loudness, in ourselves an emotional tension, we need and are accustomed to a gradual descent into calm, but not into apathy. Tears are slowly replaced by tranquillity. Rhythm, rise and fall, excitement and quiet, quick heart-beat and slow, these are the foundations of music. Relevant contrast it might be called; and it is more easily usable in music, where simultaneity is possible, than in the other arts. In addition, literature and painting use facts of the outside world to make

the patterns; and this readily obscures the emotional facts, namely, the reactions on our own feelings, though it makes the intellectual thought clearer. In music, the only outside facts used are sounds, nebulous entities, which cause emotion in us but not well-defined thoughts.

Thus the Symbolists wish to discard clear thought and logical construction, substituting emotional facts and a time-pattern construction as the exciting medium; they wish to make themselves into musicians, but to use a different sound medium from that of music. Debussy, on the other hand, suggests by his titles intellectual thoughts which shall aid the emotional appeal of the musical sounds he uses as the exciter.

One corollary to this: the Symbolists' original use of words is really the creation of new words. 'Azure' no longer has its usual meaning, but is the symbol for a new idea. Debussy similarly uses already known chords in new contexts, thus creating new chords. (How they shocked our fathers! They are all in Beethoven!) Stravinsky intends them to have an intellectual meaning, and his work thus shows the completion of Debussy's ideas of 'literising' music.

There are other similarities which may be noticed between the work of Debussy and the Symbolists. The first is the cry of 'back to Nature.' It seems a peculiarly modern cry until we remember Moses, Jeremiah, or the 'Lyrical Ballads.' For Debussy it meant cancelling the school technical traditions and writing just as one felt, bathed as one was in the serenity of open spaces and sunlit meadows: a dangerous doctrine unless you have won the Prix de Rome, and are marvellously skilful in your harmony and counterpoint. It was a healthy theory, however, though Debussy can hardly be said to have practised it consistently. He was over-read in the literary work of his time, and finds more inspiration in literary subjects: even 'Gardens in the Rain' are circumspect gardens, with smooth lawns, glistening-wet sundials and Parisian hortensia-plots bounded with neatly dripping hedges. The title is 'Gardens in the Rain,' not 'Downpour in Brittany!' Mallarmé's Nature was a cramped piece of artifice, where even the azure sky dared not be itself but symbolised some ethic doctrine, while its bird life consisted entirely of recalcitrant poems wrung from the pen of bored verse-makers. Mallarmé's love affairs even were carried on with synthetic women of the Baudelaire type, who never existed except in his hot-house imagination.

Next a note on Impressionism. It was a careless writer who first applied this word to arts other than painting. In critical work on



painting it is applied to the way in which Manet fills up the extensive wall-spaces in the Tuileries Museum, so that at a distance the admirer gets an impression of looking at some miraculous light effect on, say, reeds or standing water. If you are too close, you see little meaning in the multitude of dabs which offend your eye. If you listen too Teutonically to Debussy's music you get a similar amorphous impression, and are similarly offended. If you listen with too French an ear to Symbolist verse, you are aware of an unusual lack of intellectual significance. And so Impressionistic is the label you give to one and all.

This is clearly inaccurate thinking. The Impressionist painter seeks, surely, to rouse the eye and brain, and incite the observer to re-create, reconstruct the picture. We must 'make' the picture in a personal way. But this shirking of the final stages in the artist's work has little to do with the methods of Mallarmé and Debussy. Like the painter, they had an idea, a vision; but they sought its expression with a devotion to well-ordered beauty and a striving for accurate presentment equalled only by the great writers of the past. There is no sort of use in finding an appropriate *ism* with which to docket their work. Let us be content to recognise it as the work of artists.

As a final similarity between the two theories, one must mention the hatred of eloquence and rhetoric which both Mallarmé and Debussy referred to as *ampleur*, fulsomeness. Mallarmé's verse, like that of Verlaine, is a stone of perfect proportion set in a soberly beautiful casing. Debussy can be witty but never boisterous; he loves best to be his own polished self, dreaming his glistening dreams and noting them down in finely-span phrases—a second Couperin, and he knew it, signing himself in later days, 'CLAUDE DEBUSSY, FRENCH COMPOSER.' With such dynamic ideas as his about the renewing of his art he might have given us music showing all the concentrated force of Beethoven's. But that could not be. He was too typically French. He hated Hector Berlioz, the only other French musician of the century who had such expansive ideas—for had not Berlioz shown the bad taste of wishing to express those ideas in resounding and uncontrolled torrents of noise? That was indefensible!

An over-scrupulous taste did in fact in the end prevent both Mallarmé and Debussy from writing anything at all. For Mallarmé there existed a hierarchy of ideals for a poet: to write for the many, to write for the few, to write for one (he addresses poems to 'Madam, You Alone Know Who I Mean'), to write for oneself, not to write at all. In the event he chose the last as his ideal! 'Is not the very act of writing covering white with black, light with darkness?' he wrote

to a friend one day. It was a curious, even pathetic negative philosophy, which became more insistent with the years, and with Mallarmé's realisation that to express any part of his mysticism adequately was impossible.

We live in an age of miracles. A French poet and mystic of the nineties by his own methods achieves the same ultimate and homely wisdom as a contemporary German mathematician and logician, Herr Wittgenstein. The last general proposition of the 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus' reads:—

Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.

#### A FAUN'S AFTERNOON

The following may give some notion of this extraordinary poem, and be a guide to discovering the ideas underlying Debussy's orchestral Prelude of the same name.

The poem was first published with a frontispiece and three vignettes by Manet, in 1876, under the title of 'L'Après-Midi d'un Faune, Eglogue.' Banville had commissioned Mallarmé to write it to be recited by the actor Coquelin. Mallarmé, however, had the same high opinion of actors that he had of the audiences at his lectures or of the readers of his poems. Coquelin declared the eclogue incomprehensible, and the recital was cancelled. Years later Mallarmé contemplated an edition specially written for the stage, possibly with a ballet, but the idea came to nothing.

It should be made quite clear that the mere intellectual meaning of this poem is its least important aspect, hard though it often is to grasp. It is only too easy to misunderstand, as the following word for word translation of the first two stanzas of 'Prose' will show:—

Hyperbole! Of my remembrance  
Triumphantly can you not  
Awake to-day a wizard's scroll  
In a book with iron clad:

For I install, by science,  
The hymn of spiritual hearts  
In the work of my patience,  
Atlases, herb collections, rituals.

This gives an English reader the same difficulties as a French reader encounters in the original. Obscurity will, it is hoped, be courteously excused in the commentary when the original is as hard to seize as the above.

The beginning of the eclogue is managed with dramatic effect, if the expression may be used in such a cloudy connection. The faun is awakening from a vision of nymphs half remembered as 'hovering

in the air, drowsy with thick-clustering slumber.' His dream, he says, attains at last 'many a subtle branch,' as he recollects he is in the woods. He reflects: these two nymphs, were they only perhaps Illusion with the blue-cold eye—probably he means Art or Beauty—and Love, 'all sighs'? The only cool water in the mid-day heat is that poured out by his flute—the 'flowing music'—the only wind is that on the 'unwrinkled horizon,' the 'visible, serene and artificial breath of inspiration, which loses itself back into the sky.' His flute reminds him of his vision: 'I cut the reeds of talent and at their musical prelude two swans, nay, two nymphs, hover and are lost in the noontide air.' His old fervour is reborn, and on an 'antique flood of light'—Love—he becomes passionate Love himself. 'Lys'—'Lily'—Mallarmé calls him. But the kiss—that is, Love—which his breast has received from the nymphs is not the only mark he bears; a 'more august tooth'—that of Poetry—has left its mysterious mark on him, choosing as a *confidant* the twin reed he is now playing beneath the azure-blue of the skies, a symbol already explained. And the vision, as the long solo melts into the recesses of the woods, is purged of all its fleshly love.

But soon the faun will have none of this, and replaces his flute by the lakeside, where its reeds may grow again to tell more effectively later of his love. Meanwhile he dreams of old joys and of the exciting grape that banishes regret. 'O Nymphs!' he continues, 'let us satiate ourselves with memories of the vision!' He recollects how, when cutting the reed—that is, at the beginning of his career as a poet—his eye delighted in the sight of the nymphs, interlaced beneath the water; how he took them, 'languishing at the thought that they were two'—that is, Love and Poetry, though interlaced, were yet two separate bodies—and carried them still united from the lake to a Sicilian hillside, innocent of shadows; how he overcame the anger of his 'naked burden' which at first fled his 'burning lip,' 'trembling like lightning' at his advances. But, he goes on, my crime was this: joyous at my victory over their first fears, I disunited, divided the 'hair, dishevelled with kisses, which the gods had so well joined.' No sooner has he gained the loving consent of the one—Love—while the other—Art—becomes tainted with 'the ardent heat of her sister,' than the lovely 'prey' melts out of his arms, 'pitiless for the lustful sobbings' of the faun. The symbol is clear: the poet, losing his first innocence, has separated Love and Poetry, and his passion for writing has become but an 'illusion of shadows.'

But the impulsive faun cries, 'I care not,' and makes to flee to more earthly loves, reminded of the ghastly love of Venus for Etna,

on whose slopes the vision has vanished. So, in an ecstasy of earthly love he shouts, ' 'Tis the queen I hold! '

Then turning, disgusted: ' O punishment! '

And his ' soul void of words, and his drowsy body, succumb though late to the proud silence of noon.' All that is left is to sleep on in forgetfulness, ' on the sand lying.' Adieu to the nymphs—' I go to dream of the shadow to which you have returned.' The ideal union of Love and Verse is unattainable, and the poet is left to slumber in the hot afternoon, under the azure-blue, indolent and fatigued as he is with his efforts.

C. HENRY PHILLIPS.

## MODERN COUNTERPOINT

On the face of it nobody to-day needs to be given a definition of counterpoint. Either as the basis of nearly all music up to the time of Bach or else as the staple of the most modern technique it is emphatically the word of the moment. Nevertheless, as there are two separate, and not necessarily allied, conceptions of the thing I may as well state them both.

The first is this. Contrapuntal music is music which has to be listened to 'horizontally' (as opposed to the 'vertical' listening implied by monodic and harmonic compositions). This description is simple and clear enough, though the actual degree to which 'horizontal listening,' or the reverse, is separately practicable is a question insufficiently investigated.

The other definition of counterpoint is that it consists of the putting together, the placing one upon another, of two or more melodies. Since that implies that the structure of contrapuntal music is entirely linear it seems at first scarcely different, in effect, from the first definition. A logician, however, will have little difficulty in differentiating them; and in practice there is a very real distinction. . . .

There is, in fact, a catch in the phrase, 'the putting together of two or more melodies.' There must be a catch, because as the phrase stands it is so wide as to mean hardly anything at all. It seems to imply that any fool can write counterpoint which will be satisfactory as such (though the qualities of the melodies involved will naturally vary). Now counterpoint as an academic subject is notoriously one bristling with difficulties and requiring for its mastery both experience and intelligence as well as taste. And even academic concepts are founded, even if remotely, on facts. But there it is. On the one hand we have contrapuntal technique constantly referred to as a matter involving dexterity, ingenuity, intense skill, diligent study and practice. On the other we have a simple and, so far as it goes, accurate definition of counterpoint, the terms of which could be discharged by any tyro and any nincompoop.

The catch is so obvious that I almost need to apologise for drawing attention to it. It lies in the words 'putting together.' When we say 'the putting together' (of two or more melodies) we mean



'the putting together so as to fulfil certain conditions.' If there are no conditions to be fulfilled the definition is, I repeat, meaningless.

What, then, are the conditions? Very broadly speaking, they may be said to be two, either alternatives or to be taken jointly. The one is 'so as to make sense,' the other is 'so as to sound well.' Possibly the two mean the same thing, but the lovers of music are divided into so many types that it is more feasible to placate them all if two phrases are employed. Counterpoint is the putting together of two or more melodies so that the audible result either makes sense or sounds well or does both. Is there anyone at all who on serious reflection will quarrel with that as a working definition?

Next to be investigated is the phrase 'to make sense.' (Of the other, 'to sound well,' no examination will improve our knowledge, since it is a matter purely and simply of the unanalysable—of taste.) How can a succession of musical sounds make sense? We are dealing, be it remembered, with a succession of sounds produced by the synchronisation of a number of melodies. If we divide the thing into music's eternal couple of components, texture and progression, we have to say that the texture is fortuitous and that the progression is plural (a number of single lines having to be followed simultaneously but independently).

But is it possible for texture to be regarded as fortuitous? However fortuitous it may be to the composer, can the listener's ear accept it (or, rather, ignore it) accordingly? And to what extent is simultaneous but independent attention to a number of melodic lines practicable?

In theory (but for the saving words 'so as to make sense') I might take as my melodies, say, the first fifty tunes in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, put them in score one above the other, and the result (on performance by a hundred choristers—two to each tune for safety!) would be counterpoint. That is the *reductio ad absurdum*. We must, of course, make sense.

In my opinion, the making of sense means the recognition of texture (vertical texture, to make my meaning quite watertight) as an inevitable factor in the listener's impression, and the consideration of practical possibility in the demands made on the listener for simultaneous attention to more than one melodic line.

Let us take the latter part of the question first. How can the ear be helped to follow the required number of tunes? The oldest dodge of all is, of course, to make the tunes similar to, or even the same as, each other. Imitation, canon, inversion are words familiar to us in connection with counterpoint. Another simple and

well-known process is to get us well acquainted with each tune separately before uniting them. The stock example of that sort of thing occurs in the 'Meistersinger' overture.

The latter method means, of course, that other parts of the composition concerned are not contrapuntal. There are, in fact, a good many devices for making counterpoint satisfactory in small doses and in various non-contrapuntal contexts.

To make an entire piece contrapuntal, and nothing but contrapuntal, is a very different proposition. The fugue remains the sole and understanding form in this connection, and there the methods of 'making sense' are simple and well known. Firstly there are all the devices of canon, inversion, augmentation, diminution, imitation; though it should be noted that undeniably a certain proportion of the effect of such practices is to be seen on paper rather than heard in performance.

The other great factor used for making sense in fugues is, or at any rate was in the typical and golden period of fugue writing, tonality. Once again, I must insist on what is really an absurdly obvious point. All typical fugue writing involves a most scrupulous attention to tonality, and in all such work our appreciation depends on vertical happenings (harmony) pretty well as much as upon horizontal ones.

The use of canon, etc., is the attention to practicability in horizontal listening; the use of tonality is the recognition of texture as an inevitable factor in the total effect. These are our two high-roads to 'sense,' and the only ways of treading them. Perhaps I should add here that tonality, though strictly speaking it refers to the establishment of a keynote and perhaps to the use of a given scale, really covers any system whatever of relating the successive harmonies of a piece of music. Either the chords are related to each other (however unconventionally and unnaturally) or they are not. If they are, the clue to their relationship must be called the tonality of the piece.

As I have mentioned earlier, counterpoint is a word on everybody's lips to-day—not merely because of the fashionableness of the older composers (Bach, the Elizabethans, and so on) but because more and more during the last twenty years contemporary composers have been avowedly turning towards counterpoint and away from monody for their means of expression.

The most significant fact is that the present-day composers who more than any others are relying on counterpoint are those who have thrown overboard tonality. The prime examples are to be found

in the Schönberg school and in Hindemith and the other younger Germans. I scarcely need to emphasise how consistently we are told of Schönberg's contrapuntal mastery, how we are asked to admire the dazzling ingenuities in, for example, 'Pierrot lunaire'—and how Hindemith and the rest are also held up to us as marvellous modern contrapuntalists.

With diffidence I suggest that most of these references to ingenuity, and like qualities, are sheer nonsense. It is perfectly true that 'Pierrot lunaire' contains passacaglias, a crab canon, dizzying inversions, and what not, but that any real *ingenuity* was required to pen them I find difficult to believe. For the vital qualifications of counterpoint which demand ingenuity are here ignored, namely, tonality and/or euphony. Schönberg himself disowns the one, and I have never yet found even the most earnest Schönbergian hardy enough to claim that Schönberg's compositions sound well.

Still, perhaps that is too much a question of taste to bear debating. At any rate, it is indisputable that the majority of ultra-modern composers write 'horizontally' rather than 'vertically.' Sometimes they declare it themselves, sometimes their apologists do it for them, and in any case their music makes the fact self-evident. Indeed, it is true to say (bearing in mind, of course, the margin of error inherent in all generalisations) that 'modernity' and 'horizontalism' are in many ways synonymous. Those contemporary composers who still retain harmonic and vertical significance simply rank as not really modern in spirit.

It is my contention that only in observance of texture does counterpoint demand ingenuity and wisdom of a composer. Obviously to turn a tune upside down, or to double its note lengths, or to overlap it by a superimposed replica of itself, at the same or any other pitch—none of these things require any skill at all in themselves; it is only when the composer aims at making the resultant texture sound well or make sense that his difficulties begin.

Now the modernists who are most devoted to 'counterpoint' are the very men who have overthrown tonality. It is, in fact, their self-advertised desire, more often than not, to be listened to horizontally only, vertically not at all. The absence of harmonic meaning and the frequency with which such music ignores other vertical effects (*e.g.*, spacing, and thickness or the reverse) in any case make vertical listening (and all that it can bring of comprehension and pleasure) impossible.

I stated earlier in this essay that the extent to which sheerly horizontal listening is possible is problematical. Even granting,

however, that the gift of completely ignoring vertical effects exists or can be developed, it seems certain that the degree to which the horizontal strands can be distinguished, and their range of intelligibility and pleasurableness, must always be strictly limited.

Perhaps this is where the true field for ingenuity in the modernists lies? Having wilfully lopped off half their available resources it is up to them to demonstrate that the remainder can be self-supporting and truly satisfying. Exactly. That is a perfectly simple idea. But it can only be put to the test by audition. When I hear a work by an atonalist and unmodified contrapuntalist that shall, after a reasonable number of hearings, give me musical satisfaction, I shall, in corresponding degree, describe its composer as skilled.

So far the Hindemiths and Schönbergs almost completely fail to give me (or anyone else, so far as I can ascertain) true satisfaction in performance. Their most fervent admirers use most of their ink describing merely 'paper' effects; and for folk like me the only parts of their music which *sound* even remotely intelligible or pleasing are those where the usually so severe ignoring of vertical effects is relaxed!

For the manufacture of those paper effects, I repeat, no cunning whatever is required. Indeed, the very reverse is the truth. Any practical musician knows that, faced by so-many blank staves to be filled with music, a composer instinctively turns (simply as a *relief from fresh invention*) to canon, inversion, and such devices. They lighten his labour immeasurably (and, of course, used rightly, immeasurably improve the effect). As I say, any practical musician knows this, but let me, to make my point quite clear, give a simple illustration.

X, the composer, is writing, let us say, a string quartet. He has established one theme, and 'messed about' for awhile, and now is launching a new one. This subject consists, perhaps, in his mind of a tune on the first violin. To complete it other parts are required. Now to find those parts requires much labour and judgment. In such processes lie many of composing's most brain-teasing and heart-breaking struggles. If X can use his former subject (or a variant of it) as the basis of the new one, evidently his labour is lightened. This example is, I am quite aware, crude, isolated, to a great extent artificial. But it really does accurately portray, even if in an enormously simplified form, the typical way in which standard contrapuntal devices may actually lessen the labour of creation.

To clinch the matter I will quote a real instance from Elgar's first symphony. In the middle of the last movement (section 180) the

violins and violas enter one after the other, in canon, with a slow, long-drawn-out version (a simple augmentation) of a theme which previously has been hurled at us fortissimb and staccato and at top speed, as well as in various other guises. The musical effect is wholly satisfactory. In one sense it is evidence of fine thinking by the composer. Nevertheless, in terms of sheer invention (and five notes of invention can take it out of a composer more than fifty of mere manipulation) it represents a conservation of cerebral energy or, in plain terms, a lightening of labour.

Reverting to the first example, if X is a thorough-going modernist he will use his first air as his second bass, irrespective of whether in the more old-fashioned sense (*i.e.*, the vertical sense) it 'goes' or not. When it is recollected that his tunes themselves lack tonality, with all that it means of care in the creator, it may well be thought that really the labour of producing a modern masterpiece consists in little beyond the mere writing down of notes, of any notes, and that the more limited the variety of notes (each standard device constituting such a limitation) the better, since thereby the composer has less to invent, he is considered more ingenious, and the music actually gains. I have a peculiar bump of reverence which forbids me really to hold that view, though I have seen and heard it expressed. I shrink from believing that the work of a man like Schönberg or even a man like Hindemith is quite so empty. What I am convinced is empty, and totally wrong-headed, is at least ninety per cent. of the adulation such moderns receive. In fact, so irritating can it be that in many quarters their admirers are in effect their worst enemies. (For example, such an article as this one is prompted far less readily by listening to their music than by reading the apparent drivel which their partisans write about it.) The truth is, of course, that modern all-contrapuntal music must stand or fall by its own audible effect, and will do neither until enough years have gone by to give it perspective and reasonable familiarity. But most of the statements of its apologists can be analysed as rank nonsense, and according to them the music they so admire is made to seem nonsense too.

My belief is that, so far from counterpoint being a *substitute* for harmony, as is so widely suggested in modern schools of thought, it is almost completely dependent on harmony for effectiveness and certainly is devoid of ingenuity (however great may be its beauty and inspiration) unless it holds harmony in due regard. Atonality, on the other hand, seems to me, in practice and in theory, to be an essentially *non-contrapuntal* medium. I admit that my experience is limited, but easily the most successful piece of atonalism I know



is a piano work by Havergal Brian, which is practically without counterpoint (and rhythm, even) and is, in fact, predominantly chordal, the movement being supplied by snatches of melody (never more than one at a time) or else sheer coloratura. It is short, and programmatic (after William Blake's poem, 'The Birds'), and—so—actually comes off. Whether the method could be applied in different and larger fields I have yet to discover.

I should be very sorry to leave the impression that I have any bias against counterpoint. It is true that I believe that the present-day reaction in its favour and against monody is an exaggerated and to an extent a misguided attitude. But properly managed, whether in big doses or small, counterpoint always has been and always will be one of music's rich components. There are, too, modern composers who use it with fine effect and with real skill (as opposed to the entirely fictitious skill employed in writing out contrapuntal passages that do not pay any attention to intelligibility or beauty). But it is not the only component—and it is just doubtful whether it can possibly work alone.

RALPH W. WOOD.

## A QUESTION OF HISTORY

THE statement is continually being made in books, lectures and conversation that, at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, it might properly be expected of a gentleman that he would be able to take his part in a madrigal at short notice if not at sight. It varies considerably in form, but always asserts or implies that the gentleman of the period was trained in music as a matter of course and that the general level of attainment in part-singing was higher then than it has ever been since. The statement has been repeated so frequently that it has come to be accepted with the same sort of assurance that would attach to the statement that the earth goes round the sun.

A useful example of this purely historical assertion occurs in *The English Madrigal*, by Dr. E. H. Fellowes—useful because he cites two authorities in support thereof. The first is Thomas Morley who, in his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, tells a tale of the discomfiture of a man at a party who could neither give an opinion on a technical musical point nor take his part in the singing which followed. The passage is well known and need not be quoted here. Dr. Fellowes remarks that 'some allowance must be made for the fact that Morley was, in a sense, writing an advertisement of his own work as a Music teacher with the express object of persuading people to study his book and learn to sing.' This fact is so obvious that it would seem dangerous to base any serious conclusions on Morley's parable.

The second authority is Henry Peacham who published *The Compleat Gentleman* in 1622. In the chapter on music he writes :

I desire no more in you than to sing your part sure, and at first sight, withall, to play the same upon your Violl, or to the exercise of the Lute, privately to your selfe.

An isolated quotation from a little-known book may very easily give a quite erroneous impression. It might be, and probably would be, supposed by anyone unfamiliar with *The Compleat Gentleman* that the author was describing his contemporaries in the upper classes of society. Nothing could be further from the truth. The book was inspired by the lack of learning of all sorts which Peacham observed around him and was an attempt to combat the evil. At the end of his 'Epistle Dedicatory' he writes :

And though I am assured there are numbers, who (notwith-

standing all the Bookes and Rules in the world) had rather then behold the face of heaven, bury themselves in earthly sloath, and basest idlenesse; yet Sir William Howard at the least, let us recover you from the tyranny of these ignorant times, and from the common Education; which is, to weare the best cloathes, eate, sleep, drinke much, and to know nothing.

Again (in 'To the Reader'):

Hereby I onely give to know, that there is nothing more deplorable, than the breeding in generall of our Gentlemen, none more miserable than one of them, if he fall into misery in a strange Countrey.

These two quotations are, perhaps, sufficient to indicate the angle from which Peacham was writing. He is not describing what he found when he writes of music and other accomplishments, but urging what ought to be and was not.

Any unprejudiced person will agree that neither Morley nor Peacham make satisfactory witnesses under examination. The first admittedly had a private commercial axe to grind; the second actually tends to disprove the cause he was called to support.

This is no place for a dissertation on the history of madrigals, though it must be touched upon. The work of the Italian madrigal composers was certainly known in England in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, but apparently not widely so. The rapid spread began in 1588 when Nicholas Yonge published a collection of Italian madrigals and William Byrd published his *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of sadnes and pietie*. After that date publications came with a rush which continued, roughly, till 1612. It is a curious, but seemingly undisputed, fact that the great majority of the English madrigals were produced in the short period of 25 years (1588-1612). 'After the second decade of the seventeenth century, no work of any lasting reputation was produced, and the style soon fell into neglect.' (*Grove*.) It seems a little improbable that a custom, such as that alleged, involving so high a degree of technical accomplishment could have become prevalent among the aristocracy even in a considerably longer time than that apparently available.

Another striking fact is that the word madrigal, which 'to the best of our belief' (*Grove*), first appeared in England in the preface to Nicholas Yonge's collection, does not appear to be used by Shakespeare. Like many poets he had a strong feeling for music and made constant reference to it in other forms. No mention of madrigals or madrigal singing seems to occur in Cary's *Memoirs* or in Naunton's *Fragmenta Regalia*, to mention only two contemporary books where a reference might reasonably be expected to be found if the custom was as widespread as is alleged. Shakespeare mentions

at least one contemporary musician in John Dowland, and Dowland's career is instructive. In *English Music* Sir W. H. Hadow writes:

John Dowland (1563-1626) was a famous lute-player who travelled widely as a virtuoso through France, Germany and Italy; and who in 1598 was appointed lutenist to the Danish Court with ministerial salary. He not unnaturally complains of the contrast between his welcome abroad and his neglect at home: but Elizabeth was growing old, James I was but a sluggish patron of the arts and it was not until 1612 that some amend was made by the offer of a post in the King's household.

The latter part of this passage is slightly apologetic, but the strange thing is that the responsibility for the neglect of Dowland is placed on Elizabeth and James. Elizabeth is excused on the grounds of age, though how this could be operative for twenty years of Dowland's maturity is not explained. What was the music-loving aristocracy about? For be it observed that the lute is said to have been as much part of a gentleman's equipment as his sword. Whatever the causes may have been, Dowland's experience was startlingly similar to the experiences of some more modern English executant musicians. A great deal has been made of Hengrave Hall and the extremely interesting musical records pertaining to it. It is fully to be expected that there would have been some houses with enthusiastically musical owners who would gather friends of a like taste around them, but justification seems to be lacking for the very freely drawn conclusion that Hengrave was typical of wealthy English country homes in or about 1600. There were, of course, then as at any time since, a considerable number of people who actively appreciated and practised music; but that it was a recognised part of the normal education of the upper classes at this period is questioned. In this connection it is perhaps worth while to note that Nicholas Yonge, who did so much to popularise the Italian madrigals in this country and who ran what was probably the first madrigal society in England, was not a gentleman within the meaning of the term as then understood. It is also interesting to see that Peacham was careful to issue a warning against over-indulgence in music:

I might runne into an infinite Sea of the praise and use of so excellent an Art, but I onely shew it you with the finger, because I desire not that any Noble or Gentleman should (save at his private recreation and leasureable houres) proove a Master in the same, or neglect his more weighty employments: though I avouch it a skill worth the knowledge and exercise of the greatest Prince.

The purpose of this article is to query a particular historical belief, not to run down England. This may be left to Henry Peacham who contrasts the level of culture here most unfavourably with that

which he found in other countries, but with whom we are not called upon of necessity to agree. It is not out of place to insist on this intention because, although historical criticism approximates ever more nearly in method to procedure in the realm of physical science (witness the work of Mr. Ernest Newman on Wagner), there are many people who are deeply offended when some cherished legend is attacked and who promptly betray themselves by irrelevant accusations directed to the disturber of their faith and peace.

RICHARD C. POWELL.



## WAGNER'S FATAL LEGACY

To receive a big legacy is dangerous : a truth which few of us have been fortunate enough to learn by bitter experience. Most of us, however, can produce instances to prove this, either from real life or from fiction. Lest examples from life should prove distressing to living persons, let us take an instance from fiction.

Roger Scatcherd, the hard-working, hard-drinking stone-mason-builder in Anthony Trollope's splendid novel *Doctor Thorne*, builds up a huge fortune. His life was equally divided between industry and alcohol, but so wonderful was his stamina that he could undertake more work when drunk than another man could undertake when sober. He left one son, Sir Louis Scatcherd (Roger was created a baronet), who inherited his father's wealth, his vicious propensities but not his father's genius or character, and the end of that young man came swiftly, horribly.

In applying the parable to Richard Wagner, I must insist that my parable be treated with that courtesy extended to other parables and that the application be made not detail by detail, but in general outlines. Like Roger Scatcherd, Richard Wagner was a self-made man, a genius of immense force of character, doing what no man had ever conceived possible, marred by certain faults (I do not refer to his personal character) yet, in a way, master of those faults. He left an immense legacy to posterity, a legacy which has probably done more harm to modern thought than any monetary legacy did to a family.

The harm wrought by his legacy, his experience and his experiments is twofold : (a) its effect upon critical judgment ; (b) its effect upon the course of music since his day.

Let us examine the harm which his experience has wrought upon criticism. Everyone knows and probably exaggerates the struggle which Wagner had to make his way in the musical world. Everyone knows, too, that his operas from 'The Flying Dutchman' to 'Parsifal' are among the world's masterpieces. Everyone therefore argues that music and all other art which fails to win contemporary appreciation must be over the heads of contemporary intelligence, and that in time it will prove its greatness, a belief which has brought more balm to the souls of ambitious poetasters than any other critical

soothing syrup. To-day if some good, honest art lover confesses that he finds some modern art awful, the superior person rams into his ears the old worn-out story of Wagner.

That Wagner was not appreciated (if indeed his experience was worse than many others, which I doubt) is probably just what we should have expected. Putting ourselves back in those times, what should we have felt? Remember that we should have been brought up upon Beethoven—the last great sonatas, the symphonies. Well, we go to hear 'Tannhäuser.' Could anyone brought up upon the pure white glory of Beethoven's melodies really enthuse over the opening of the overture? The falling cadences of bars four and eight? The progression in bars five and six? Doubtless the orchestration, the energy and construction would have delighted us but should we not have felt that in spiritual value the new man was inferior to the old?

Throughout 'Tannhäuser' and 'Lohengrin' there are many sections which must have definitely sounded retrogressive, therefore we have no right to condemn contemporary judges if they, having no Siegfried, Walküre, etc., to guide them, shook their heads sadly over the future of music.

It is easy for us, armed with a full knowledge of Wagner's work, to pity the blindness of his contemporaries, but I doubt if even the wisest of us would have been any more perceptive. Nevertheless using the case of Wagner as a precedent we are apt to argue that any work which our fathers do not like is too progressive for them. Now this belief that children are wiser than their parents is one which history can easily shatter. If we admit that one particular age of art is good it follows that the art of the succeeding age was a retrogression though the generation which produced it doubtless thought it an advance. Let us imagine a house furnished with perfect taste by one of the old craftsmen of the past, Chippendale, for instance. In such a house there are the parents who have collected these masterpieces of furniture, and the growing children, 'intensely modern, you know,' who gained their majority in the flood tide of Victorianism. They, the children, wholeheartedly believed that decorated fans, pictures of the Queen in shells and coloured sand, heavy hangings and such productions of the new age were vastly superior to the old simplicity of Papa and Mama. In vain does Mama sigh, and Papa expostulate. Neither sighs nor expostulations can check the inflowing tide of Victorianism. 'Oh, Mama,' says Corisande, 'you are so old-fashioned. Can't you see how lovely these new things are?' Mama cannot, and she is consequently considered lacking in taste, old-fashioned, dowdy. But we know (or

think we know) that Mama was right and that the new art was definitely a set-back.

To argue therefore from the instance of Wagner that the disapproval of our fathers means that they are wrong is a mistake. It may be we who are at fault.

The trouble is that each generation grows to like its own ideas, and is incapable (except in a few cases) of standing aside and judging those ideas, just as no polecat is really able to judge whether its presence in a room is discernible or not. And the worst of it is that each age thinks that is the *only* age and therefore right, just as presumably (I speak without authority) a polecat is quite happy with other polecats but cannot stand that odious brute the skunk.

The first evil, then, of the Wagner legacy is the belief that each age advances and that those who do not believe it are hopelessly lacking in appreciation. The belief, sincerely held by many, is also flaunted by others who seek to gate-crash progressive circles by loudly maintaining the convictions of others. The fact that old age, however wise, thinks some modern compositions inferior to those of Brahms is sufficient for youth, however ignorant, to pride himself upon the superiority of his judgment.

Arising out of the Wagnerian instance is the corollary that since Wagner was not appreciated therefore to be not appreciated is Wagner. Acting upon this belief the critic is determined not to make the mistake of the early Wagner critics, and therefore greets every new work which baffles everyone except the composer, as a work of genius which repeated hearings 'will ultimately prove to be the greatest work' since the last. So masterly has the art of prescient criticism become that there is no work however dull, ponderous or artificial which cannot be viewed as a masterpiece. If it is as dreary as a November fog then it is described as a sombre work full of beauty for those who can appreciate half-tones. If it is one of those mathematically produced aridities of modern counterpoint it is described as a work which makes no concessions to the listeners' comfort, preferring to state its message in straightforward unadorned simplicity.

So eagerly do these enthusiastic fellows rush to meet future Wagners, and to shout great hail to the comers from the unknown shore, that many musical people, readers of leading papers, form their opinions in exact opposition to what these critics say. Their formula is either: (i) If the critic of the Daily Puff admires that work, I know it is not the sort for me and I turn off my loud speaker if it comes

along, or (ii) I think I shall enjoy that piece—I see that the Daily Puff runs it down.

The reading of history shows us that Wagner was not alone in meeting opposition or disapproval. Hundreds of men have met the same lack of appreciation, but not because they were revolutionary. For instance Brahms' works, which were if anything reactionary, met with no success. Strauss the younger was not approved of by his father though there is nothing particularly revolutionary about the 'Blue Danube.' No one could call 'Faust' revolutionary or a work born out of season, yet its failure was as complete as any work of Wagner's. In each case non-success was due to the fact that the audience and the critics did not meet the work sympathetically. When we hear an established work we unconsciously excuse its shortcomings and glory in its success; when we hear a new work we consciously condemn its shortcomings and glory in its failure.

Another fact which contributed to Wagner's difficulties was the nature of Wagner's work. If he had been writing piano pieces, songs, etc., it is quite possible that he could have been free of his friend's financial assistance quite early in life, if he had wished. But writing as he did operas of immense length and of exceptional difficulty it is not surprising that he made but little headway. Even so he made a great deal more headway than any Englishman could make to-day.

Now just as non-appreciation by an ordinary audience in no way proves a work to be great beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man, so the instantaneous appreciation of a work by an ordinary audience in no way proves it commonplace. 'Figaro' was an immediate and lasting success, so was 'Der Freischütz,' so was 'Pickwick,' so was 'Antigone,' so was the 'Mikado.' Indeed if critics ceased to exist and the popular reception of any work was truthfully recorded by unpontifical journalists, all artists (including Wagner) would be happier.

The next item in the ill-fated legacy is the confusion of the arts for which Wagner is responsible, though not altogether intentionally. With incomparable genius he brought together music, poetry and gesture, and treated them as one. Since then all critics have been trying to follow his example, forgetting that he himself did not seek to justify his action except in the theatre. But since his death the inheritors of his legacy have been definitely discussing the several arts as though they were interchangeable, analysing music as though it were painting, poetry as though it were music, and sculpture as though it were ballet. And the result is that music (to mention but one victim) has lost its own especial function and is occupied in trying to do what she has never meant to do.

Criticisms of new orchestral works nowadays read just like criticisms of an Academy Exhibition, or would do so if criticisms of Academy Exhibitions did not read exactly like criticisms of orchestral works. Let us suppose that a new work by Mr. Jinks is produced, the criticism then runs something like this: 'In his new orchestral work produced last night Mr. Jinks shows an admirable sense of colour; his orchestral tints are laid on with no uncertain brush,' etc. No mention is made of melody, of design or of development, for these purely musical characteristics are apparently out of date.

To realise the difference in the attitude to music we have only to compare the points of view of one hundred years ago with the present day. Imagine a scene in 1827—a husband goes to hear a new work by Beethoven (there being only one ticket) and promises to tell his wife all about it on his return. When he comes in she says: 'And how did you enjoy the new Beethoven, my dear?' 'Oh, my love,' he exclaims, 'I wish you could have heard it, quite lovely. It started off with a theme like this' (he strums a few bars on the piano) 'and then there was a lovely passage like this' (more strumming). 'My dear, how clever of you to remember it.' 'Not at all, my love, the themes were all so striking that no one could miss them. Of course it was a bit wild at times, but then we must expect that from Beethoven.'

Now imagine a scene from 1927. A wife goes to hear a new work (there being only one ticket) and promises to tell her husband all about it on her return. When she comes in, he says, 'And what was the new work like, my dear?' 'Too wonderful, quite too wonderful.' 'How did it go?' he asks. 'It's no good asking how it went,' she answers somewhat petulantly, 'it was just a wonderful mood-picture called Sahara; it gave me the impression of dreary desolation stretching into infinity; quite lovely.'

This change in our attitude is to a great extent due to Wagner, or at least to the misguided enthusiasm of his disciples. It is very doubtful whether Wagner would have approved of these mood-pictures in the concert room. I think we may say with certainty that he would never have approved of his own transcription of the Rhine being played in the concert room. But the evil is done. Songs are no longer songs—lovely melodic lines, aided by suggestive accompaniments, intensifying the thought of some poet—but declamations striving to catch every detail of the poem at the expense of all that the human voice prizes—beauty of sound in cadence sweetly turned. Orchestral works suffer a similar abuse, they emulate the style and manner of theatre music, and having no scenic representation to justify their harshness, their angularity and their formlessness,



become merely wearisome and intolerable. And because the ordinary man thinks them intolerable, their composers pride themselves in being, like Wagner, rebels against accepted convention.

But allowing that Wagner was a rebel, because he flouted accepted theories, the case of the modern composer is entirely different. Readers of Dante will remember a scene in which a man is watched in combat with a serpent. As the struggle proceeds the man's legs shrink and he crawls away on his belly hissing like a serpent, while the serpent develops legs and walks away erect. Such a change has imperceptibly come over the two schools of art—the classical and the revolutionary. In the days of Wagner, to rebel against classical ideas was abnormal, meeting in consequence the fierce denunciation of the normally-minded. To-day to be a rebel is normal and requires no more courage than driving sheep. When all one's friends are being unintelligible, fiercely and meaninglessly dissonant, exploiting new theories of contrapuntal tone-values, to do likewise is merely swimming with the stream. To-day the revolutionary is the brave man who strikes out his own line in spite of the opposition of those who expect him to pursue the beaten track of oddity or extravagance.

Fortunately legacies in time get spent, especially if they fall into the hands of the reckless, and so we may hope that the evil, critical and musical, which Wagner bequeathed to the world may soon pass away; that music will soon be recognised as an independent art with her own forms and ideals; that theatre music with its justifiable use of harshness, angularity, and even vulgarity will be relegated to the theatre, and that the argument founded upon Wagner's struggles will be allowed to pass out of æsthetic conversations.

A. E. BRENT SMITH.

## IN DEFENCE OF WIRELESS

WIRELESS as a means of enjoyment is still so young that like other youthful things, such as the cinema and motors, it often offends the sensibilities of its relations. Perhaps like its worshippers it has seven parts to play and one can hardly say, as yet, whether it is in the mewling and puking stage or, having gone unwilling to school, jumped the usual intermediate stages to the mere purveyance of wise saws and modern instances. Admittedly wireless is still growing and ought to be heard regularly for improvements—no one would dream of judging present conditions by the doleful ballads trotted out ten years ago when all it seemed good for was election results—but, as in all criticism, mercy should temper justice in its appreciation. It is easy to be influenced by the raucous sounds which emerge from wireless shops and determine never to own the creature, but in so doing one loses a lot. No one can bring to a subject something of which he is not capable and the man whose æsthetic sense is bounded by Wallace and Bizet can have but little use for Bach and Delius—yet. It is here that the function of the wireless enters. As an entertainer purely it is still acting as a narcotic—a drug, one might say, of the most virulent type, since it offends the sense of others besides the addict—what in the Purgatorio could equal the horrors of a noisy jazz band or ghoulish cinema organ from the flat above? But in the character of educator, of bringing out latent ideas of the 'good life,' it should be invaluable. Few of us are sufficiently creative to be able to invent a fresh medium of expression for ourselves, we play a little and paint a bit, cook a little or garden a bit, but most are looking for a guide, and whilst the multiplicity of interests catered for by the wireless may lead to more slushy thinking if indulged in in the perfunctory manner of some folk, it should tend to clarify thought and help the man with many, but not very deep interests, to canalise them. Most of the population to-day, even with a university education, is only semi-educated, and one can never be sufficiently enthusiastic in defence of those who are teaching us to know ourselves. A well-known writer recently said that no one's mentality appreciably alters after the early twenties. Such a sweeping indictment may be true in many

cases; the affairs of this world tend to put a man into a groove from which it is hard to emerge; but there is evidence to show that wireless has been responsible for changing the general outlook of many after the age of thirty, giving them more serious interests. The wireless means so many things to so many people that a complete eulogy of it could scarcely be contained in this article; but from the point of the music lover alone, it is a new planet sent to light our æsthetic skies, and brings to view a whole world of thought from which without it we should have been debarred.

For one thing, music is now brought to many who previously had no knowledge of a symphony or chamber concert. The dweller in big cities has no conception of the straits to which a music lover is put in the country. Of course there were always local bands and singers, and the more enthusiastic got away occasionally to the town for a concert. Possibly the effort of making or hearing music in such a way was more praiseworthy than merely taking it idly in one's chair—the bliss of personal creation, however feeble, is always greater than hearing someone else's superior effort—but it is infinitely better to be able to hear the masterpieces of the past rendered by acknowledged masters over the ether than to suffer them in their frequently mangled form in the concert halls of country towns. Only those who can remember the nightmare of pre-war operatic touring companies can understand the joy of being able to hear even half an exquisitely rendered Wagner opera by means of wireless. Again the effort of hearing the best music, even in London, is too great to be endured very often by the busy worker—the 'Proms' are out of reach of all but a small proportion of enthusiasts, and the thought of being able to listen to them at home is one which sustains many a toiler during the heat of August and September—and if, by great effort, a seat has been obtained for a recital or symphony concert the music is so often spoilt by extraneous noises, smells and interruptions of all sorts that the performance becomes a trial instead of a delight. Admittedly one lacks the atmosphere of the concert hall at home, but by closing their eyes most imaginative people can fancy themselves there in a much more comfortable seat and with far less possibility of annoyance. Granted that the atmosphere of home is more generally pleasing to the listener than if he were sitting uncomfortably in the gallery, standing in the well at a 'Prom' or pressed distastefully in the stalls between two ultra-beperfumed individuals, there remains to be considered the sounds which come to him over the air. Apart from the professional, most people listen to a concert for its general effect—the birds' morning hymn of praise is quite good enough without

bothering about individual birds, and in England we have got out of the way of expecting to understand the words of a song, and if the general sound is pleasing we are content. And it must be admitted that the whole level of articulation has risen enormously in the last ten years, due mainly to the influence of wireless. A middle-aged musician to-day would give years of his life to have been able to hear in his youth the symphonies and concertos on which so much of his present happiness depends, since it is only by constant repetition that the various parts of a symphony, except possibly that of the first violins, can be clearly recognised. So that the early repeated hearing of the great masterpieces can only come to a large proportion of the population by means of radio or gramophone. Score reading by itself can never be completely satisfactory. Thus through a wireless set one may discover for the best in music a love which hitherto has lain dormant.

But certain conditions must be observed. The best set is not necessarily the loudest, but it must have valves to give selectivity and power to eliminate neighbouring stations. The set must be carefully tuned in some time before the concert starts so as to allow the valves to settle down and should not be switched about from one station to another in the fond hope of being able to return with the same result. One's neighbours should also be selected with great care, a matter more easily arranged at home than at a concert. Children can be packed off to bed if inclined to create a disturbance and one can then settle down at will with a pipe and a drink, both great aids to concentration, as well as a necessary score, the latter always a difficulty in a concert hall. No one in their senses would hope to hear Bach as a background for bridge or tea, and since music is best heard absolutely alone or at most with only one neighbour, this should weigh heavily on the credit side of wireless. The ear has to be trained just as the eye to latent beauties and when one has grown from a mere liking for a good tune, through Purcell and Rameau and Handel, to Mozart and Scarlatti, Beethoven and Bach, one's enthusiasm is such that it will brave a wet night, a crowded train and a poor seat in order to hear in full perfection a work to which one has listened and grown to love at home. Wireless listening will never supersede attendance in person, it merely helps to eliminate the second rate and the parlour performer and the genuine music lover will always want to see for himself the operas whose music he now knows so well, and to watch the hands and study the technique of the pianist to whom he has listened at home with such delight.

But the possibilities of radio are still so great that one feels it a

pity when precious time, which might be put to better purpose, is wasted on such puerilities as most of the vaudeville and all of the cinema organ music. People's lives can be altered out of all recognition by an acquaintance with the best music and since so little, comparatively, is available outside one can never cease to be grateful for the chance which thrust a wireless set on us and turned us from scoffers into enthusiasts.

MURIEL FAIRBROTHER.



## REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

The following list contains a selection of recent books on music. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price given is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. As a rough guide the values to the nearest farthing *at par of exchange* are here given:—Dollar, 4s. 1½d.; Florin (Dutch), 1s. 7½d.; Franc (French), 2d., (Belgian), 1½d., (Swiss), 9½d.; Lira, 2½d.; Mark, 11½d.; Krone, 1s. 1½d.; Peseta, 9½d.; Rupee, 1s. 6d.; Schilling, 7d.; Zloty, 5½d. To the price so obtained about one third may at the present moment be added.

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C. B. O.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Lorenzo Da Ponte's Memoirs.* Preface and notes by Raoul Vèze.  
Henri Jonquières, Paris.

The editor of this new issue of *Da Ponte's Memoirs*, M. Raoul Vèze, complains that both Da Ponte and his works are unknown in France. Even in literary circles, he remarks, Da Ponte's name is never heard. Is there any reason why Da Ponte should be remembered in France or in any other country? He escapes complete oblivion solely on account of his association with Mozart. But Da Ponte had too high an opinion of himself to accept the humble rôle of a Boswell and thus lost his one opportunity to deserve well of posterity. If he knew how to construct a libretto, as a poet he resembles those modern composers who, having mastered a technique of sorts, refuse to believe that music without individuality is a dish in whose composition salt has been omitted. A versifier he was, although surpassed by many contemporary Italians, including his rival, Casti. Of the true poet he had neither the mind nor the heart and it is not surprising if his poems are not found in any anthology.

The memoirs are interesting enough as a picaresque tale of the eighteenth century. Veracity is not to be sought there. Da Ponte was the friend of Casanova and wished to be remembered not as he actually was but as he would have liked to be. Their weakness, however, is not in the revelation of faults of character such as immense vanity and egotism. Alfieri's autobiography also suggests vanity and egotism, but it conveys also an impression of reality, of sterling qualities, will power, courage, determination. Da Ponte's scenes are as unreal as those of a third rate melodrama. This traveller who visited so many European countries and ended his life in America never saw the world as it was. Perhaps he had no gift for understanding men. Perhaps the age, corrupt as it was, was not corrupt enough to welcome the unfrocked priest. The artificial 'academy,' the lion-hunting nobleman tolerated him, but we feel sure that the doors of those sturdy, opinionated, honest Venetian merchants, drawn to the life by Goldoni, were ever closed to Da Ponte and his like. The life of Da Ponte passed amongst women too stupid to kindle anything like real, fruitful affection, and amongst men mostly too far above him to make a stout friendship possible. And in his relations with women this licentious gallant appears to have been more stupid than fortunate, like one of Congreve's fools rather than like Congreve's heroes. Overwhelming conceit may have led him to believe that a woman may fall in love with him in a couple of hours; but only a stupid man could grow sentimental over such an intrigue.

There is a pathetic and even tragic aspect to these 'Memoirs.' Da Ponte was convinced he possessed the genius of a great writer. Neither failures nor rebukes could cast the shadow of a rising doubt on the profound belief he had in himself and his powers. He was always alone against the world. He lived in an age less democratic than ours, when few avenues were open to an ambitious and talented youth who had neither birth nor wealth to commend him. If he entered

the Church it was not because he wished it but because the Church offered the easiest solution of a difficult problem. And although he met good as well as ill fortune in his wanderings, he seems to have been always haunted by the fear of poverty. After quarrelling with Casanova the worst charge he can bring against him was that Casanova was poor, that no one knew how he lived. The fear of poverty and the sting of ambition make a hard pillow for one's head. He must have been a 'poseur' who believed in his pose, who took Almaviva as his model and was certainly proud that he did not live by 'Almavivery' alone, having a trade which carried him as far as the court of Vienna, then the most brilliant court in Europe. Yet he was never sure of the morrow.

M. Vèze adds to the volume an appendix of considerable value since it throws light on the alleged participation of Casanova in the libretto of *Don Giovanni*. Suspicions were aroused when a few verses from *Don Giovanni* were discovered amongst Casanova's papers in Casanova's handwriting. M. Vèze himself appears to look upon this as serious evidence against Da Ponte. Mr. Dyneley Hussey, in his excellent volume on Mozart, takes a more lenient view and is of opinion that Da Ponte, pressed for time, invited his friend to provide a few lines. The appendix shows that Casanova had often both criticised and translated some of Da Ponte's work. In the circumstances it is plausible to suppose that Casanova had rewritten the lines in question with a view to either improvement or translation. Of the new letters to Casanova which form the main body of the appendix, they reveal little that is new. One in which Da Ponte refers to his wife, Nancy, as 'Mon épouse formellement' would seem to imply that before then Casanova was ignorant of the fact that the two were married. This would also explain the earlier reference to Nancy as his 'cognata,' which M. Vèze appears to think a mere jest.

F. BONAVIA.

*Paul Hindemith.* By Heinrich Strobel. Melosverlag. Mainz. M. 3.20.

This is the second, revised and much enlarged edition of a German monograph on Paul Hindemith. Well worth perusing as it is, it had perhaps better be read soon, since Hindemith continues to turn out new music at a furious rate and the author, who in his preface says that he is anxious to keep pace with him, will again have to add new material before long. Much of what he tells us about the music composed roughly up to the middle of 1931, however, is of permanent value.

Hindemith's aims, understanding of which is indispensable to the proper appraisal of his music, are clearly interpreted as a trend that had inevitably to manifest itself amid the peculiar conditions prevailing in the artistic Germany of to-day. Whether we like that music or not—and that must still remain a matter of taste—this book makes it perfectly plain that he must write as he does and that his sincerity is beyond question.

But an author's elaborate analysis and almost invariably appreciative comment alone cannot convince us that any composer's work has an absolute value. In justifying, as Herr Strobel successfully

does, Hindemith's theories, he can only prove that his work has a distinct merit in relation to them, and even if they remain valid, it is very possible that Hindemith may one day be seen to have only opened up a new field for fruitful cultivation by others. All this is not to say that one does not believe in the individual worth of much of Hindemith's music; it is only to show that Herr Strobel does not prove it by his particular method of critical approach, however passionate his admiration.

E. BLOM.

*The Women in Wagner's Life.* By Julius Kapp. Translated by Hannah Waller. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

Those who expect a craving for sensation to be gratified will be less disappointed in this book than those who may hope to learn yet more of the genesis of the works by the most explored of composers. The author extracted its contents in 1912, as a sort of by-product, from a vast quantity of Wagnerian correspondence that came into his hands for his edition of *Collected Letters*. His most interesting source, however, he tells us, was that opened up to him for a later, revised edition, from which the present excellent translation had been made. That source was the Burrell collection, which contains much tell-tale material of the utmost value to the inquisitive biographer, including all the letters formerly in the possession of Minna Wagner's daughter. Unfortunately it is not possible to make out clearly whether the author actually saw this material, for he says in his preface that it was a godsend to him to obtain access to *the catalogue* of the Burrell collection, a catalogue which, we know only too well, has already lent itself to some literary mischief. It is true that in the text of the book a number of actual passages from the Burrell letters are certainly quoted, but then the catalogue too, it appears, contains a number of quotations.

However, one's impression is that Herr Kapp has gone very carefully and conscientiously to work, and it must be said that the new facts, which have to be taken on trust, fit in both with the tale of Wagner's life and with his character, though both are erratic enough to accommodate almost any occurrence, however wildly improbable.

Wagner's love-life, as told in these pages, should be exciting enough for anyone. Never before has it been shown so clearly what a capacity for high ideals on the one hand and for low sensuality on the other he possessed, the two being kept going side by side with different recipients by a most surprising gift of self-delusion. But if Herr Kapp can hold most readers by his mingled tale of devotion and intrigue, he will hardly convince many, as he attempts to do in order to justify some rather unsavoury disclosures, that these facts have the least bearing on the development of Wagner as an artist. It is flattering to Mathilde Wesendonck to go on indulging in the old notion that there would have been no 'Tristan' without her and a kindness to Cosima to assert that but for her desertion of Bülow there would have been nothing after the 'Mastersingers'; but the simple truth is surely that Wagner was the kind of man who had to have a varied amorous life and had to create the kind of work for which he was fitted. The works might have been different if the women in his life had been different, but there must inevitably have been some of both, for

both were necessary to him. Posterity must just make up its mind to accept the adventures with the achievements without insisting on the comforting doctrine of their interdependence.

E. BLOM.

*Planning for Good Acoustics.* By Hope Bagenal and Alex. Wood. Methuen.

The title of this book might suggest that it is a work for the architect rather than the musician. It is, however, a book of which certain chapters at least ought to be read and digested by musicians. A study of these could hardly fail to be of practical benefit and might help to remedy some of those faults, that, through disregard of acoustic conditions on the part of player or conductor, make ineffective in performance what may technically be correct in execution. The player is concerned with producing sound, the audience with hearing it. There is a third invisible factor, the building, the potency of which is too often forgotten. One of the points which this book serves to emphasise most clearly is that every building is, to some degree, an instrument. It has a direct influence on sound. People sing in their baths and children shout under railway arches for definite reasons. The mediæval church with its long reverberation helped to evolve polyphony out of plainsong. There is even a story, true or untrue, of a Mass composed by Fairfax of St. Albans, for which the Abbey itself supplied the fourth part. Bach's choral and organ works are properly understood only when considered in relation to the arrangement and acoustic conditions of the Thomaskirche at Leipzig, as it was in his time. Handel's technique that culminated in the 'Messiah' was largely developed at Covent Garden. The Wagner theatre at Bayreuth owes its form to Wagner's own ideas of the requirements of his music, and is not suitable for much else. There can, then, be no final and absolute standard for the interpretation of music; it is necessary to adjust tempi, volume of tone, the size of orchestras and so on to suit the particular properties of the building, considered itself as a musical instrument.

With new buildings, on the other hand, it is possible to adjust the acoustics to the type of music that will be performed in them, and musicians should be careful to inform the architect, before he starts his design, what this is to be. It is often assumed that the subject of acoustics is a mystery that no one has ever been able to explain. This book should serve to dispel that delusion; the researches of its authors and the pioneer work in America of Dr. Sabine have made it almost an inexcusable reproach to build new concert halls, churches or indeed anything else in such a way that they turn out acoustically unsatisfactory. Conductors, and organists in particular, would do well to read this book.

S. E. DYKES BOWER.

*Ein Orchestermusiker über das Dirigieren.* By Hans Diestel. Berlin: Edition Adler. 1931. M. 3.

The author is a member of the Berlin State Opera orchestra—a violinist, so we soon guess. He calls the orchestra the conductor's violin, the baton his bow. Nikisch and Richard Strauss are his heroes.



'Restraint' is the burden of his pages. 'Complete technique is the avoidance of all unnecessary movement. Restraint is the secret of the great conductor's technique.' Along with restraint in the extent of gesture goes the maintenance of tension. 'Tension is the formative factor for the contents of time.' He pleads for restrained and intelligible movements, for mind in gesture. The poetry of the work in hand is the exclusive consideration during a performance; the conductor who endeavours to instruct or to scold his men is distracting them from concentration on the music. Rehearsing is dealt with in another chapter; the argument here is that the conductor spoils a performance if in spirit he is still more or less rehearsing, and consequently not absorbed by the poetry of the music. The point of the baton corresponds to the point of contact between bow and fiddle-string; it draws the musical line. The conductor does not deserve his name, then, who really beats with his elbows while his baton is a mere appendage. Such conducting is less like the violinist's line-drawing than like piano-thumping; it makes for jerks, angularity, and the destruction of flowing lines.

A caustic French critic some few years ago wrote of our Queen's Hall as 'the platform of cool orchestras and heated conductors.' Herr Diestel has a number of such critical dicta, and his comments give the orchestra's point of view. These criticisms often express or imply sympathy with a toiling conductor whose extremist efforts are nullified by unresponsive sullen players. A critic wrote: 'The conductor exerted himself to the utmost, almost wrenching out his arms, and conjuring the players with every sort of look and gesture; but they failed to react, in fact they hardly looked up.' In this sentence Herr Diestel reads a case not of the indifference of musicians unworthy of the name but of an attempt on the part of the orchestra, in spite of the conductor, to preserve the ensemble and to save something out of the wreck of a performance. 'An audience may feel some discomfort at the disparity between the conductor's gestures and the musical expression in such a case, but it would assuredly declare the performance intolerable and refuse to sit it out if the playing actually corresponded to such conducting as the criticism describes'—such is Diestel's heartfelt comment. 'Against the distraction of extravagant conducting techniques the man in the audience can always protect himself by shutting his eyes; the man in the orchestra has not this resort, but must exert himself to make the most of a bad job, doing all he can to help rescue the performance from disaster.' Herr Diestel does not believe unwilling orchestras exist, but he has evidently had far too much reason for his belief in the existence of incompetent conductors. A lifetime's experience has brought him to take his revenge in the writing of this little book, and a magnanimous piece of revenge it is, serious in temper, instructive and suggestive. Only conductors and orchestral players will already know all about it. Herr Diestel's average reader will go to his next orchestral concert with a newly sharpened attention. There is a preface by Richard Strauss.

R. CAPELL.

*Eigenartige Musikinstrumente.* By D. J. Balfourt. J. P. Kruseman: Haag, Holland.

We welcome this little treatise on some curious types of musical instruments not only because it forms the fourth volume of an interest-

ing series entitled 'De Muziek,' but as a small instalment (we hope) of a more complete description of the fine collection made by Dr. Scheuleer and illustrated in 1913, though not catalogued, in his pictorial and poetical account of the museum at The Hague where it is housed.

The instruments with which the author here deals are the Shofar, Nonnengeige, Drehleier, Dudelsack, Glasharmonika, Psalter and Hackbrett, and their peculiarities and use are clearly and popularly expressed. His description of the Nonnengeige in its initial stages and also in its later form as the true Trumpet Marine, is well written; and he very rightly has spurned the absurd idea that it was used by the British Navy for signalling at sea. In fact it is not an English instrument at all, however popular it may have been in this country at the close of the seventeenth century. A wrong date—1600 instead of 1699—which he has given for the issue of the book *The Mock Trumpet* has misled him: and also, I fear, an illustration in 'Old English Instruments of Music,' copied by Miss Panum and shown on page 24 (Abb. 7): the present reviewer had no intention of posing there as a monk or of suggesting that the Trumpet Marine was employed 'in den Englischen Klöstern bis zur Hälfte des 19 Jahrhunderts.'

The mechanism of the Drehleier, or Hurdy-gurdy, as it was called by us in its low estate, is carefully explained and the great popularity it enjoyed in France as the *Vielle à roue*, together with the *Musette*, in the days of the Grand Monarque and the fashionable pastoral life of Versailles is noted. The 'one-man' instrument, however, was certainly in use long before the beginning of the seventeenth century; it is frequently portrayed in the carvings and illuminations of the late thirteenth century.

Of the Bagpipe some closer suggestion as to its origin than 'Asia' might have been attempted, and we are thankful that the terrible name 'Verillon' (or more correctly Verrillon) for the Musical Glasses was not used in England; it was at one time called the 'Angelica.'

The final chapter clearly explains the difference between the Psaltery and the Dulcimer, though we cannot agree with the writer in his statement that the latter instrument was not known in Europe before 1300, for Byzantine work of about the year 1150 shows it in full use.

It is unfortunate that in these one hundred little pages so many misprints occur. Some have already been noted, but such mistakes, for instance, as *Fleet Tavern* for *Fleece Tavern*, *St. Jones* (a possible Welsh saint) for *St. James*, *Gentle* for *Glette*, *Kirchgasser* for *Kirchgässner*, *J. H. Fischer* for *J. U. Fischer*, *Henry III* for *Edward III*, *Henry VII* for *Henry VIII*, etc., only confuse the reader in a book with good clear type and twenty-six well-produced illustrations.

F. W. GALPIN.

*Hebrew Music.* By David Ewen. New York: Block Publishing Company. 1931.

This short history of Jewish music, the work of a racial enthusiast, is in reality an appeal to his Hebrew compatriots to clothe their poetical inspirations and ritual worship in the classic garb of the great composers. Whether the synagogue rules would permit the use of

such elaborate compositions as we find in the MMS. or sanction the accompaniment of a large orchestra, as the writer advocates, remains to be seen: but no doubt music of the cantata type might be adopted, though for its success a Bach is needed. An interesting chapter is devoted to the age of the *payyatim*—Jewish bands, who from the fifth to the twelfth centuries of our era sought to beautify and brighten the services of the synagogue with eloquent and good melodies culled from folk-songs and church tunes. Following Friedlander, the writer traces the origin of the *neumes* used in the Western Church to the Hebrew poetical accents framed as a guide for the musical declamation of the Psalms, Prayers and Scriptures: but these accents were only added to the text at the earliest in the eighth century A.D. In his concluding chapters a useful summary is given of the state of Hebrew music at the present time and the efforts of Ernest Bloch and the younger Russians receive merited praise; but he refuses to recognise as his national music the compositions of those who, like Ravel and Milhaud, have merely founded their ideas on Hebrew melodies and 'are not truly Jewish at heart.'

It is a common failing with enthusiasts that they allow their imagination to outstrip their judgment. A little more research and balance would have prevented the author from stating that 'while the music of the ancient nations was yet in a highly abortive state Hebrew music was already on a high level of development': nor would he have claimed that Miriam's 'Song of Triumph' or 'The Song of Solomon' were really indisputable examples of the music(?) of the days of Moses or due to the royal inspiration.

The Israelites, in fact, were by no means a progressive musical people, though they adopted such Sumerian, Egyptian, Syrian or Greek developments of the art as suited their exclusiveness. It is for this long-delayed awakening that the rousing call of the writer to his people has been made and may it meet with an effective and soul-stirring response.

F. W. GALPIN.

*Harpe und Harpenspiel. Vom Beginn des 16. Bis ins zweite Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts von Hans Joachim Zingel, Dr. Phil. 1932. M. Niemayer (Verlag) Nolle. 74 Hg.*

Dr. H. I. Zingel may be congratulated on adding a valuable contribution to the history of musical instruments. The harp has been sorely neglected by modern musical research and the work under review certainly adequately fills the gap.

The book is written in three main sections of which the first most comprehensively describes the various forms of the harp used in European music from the renaissance to the second half of the eighteenth century. Of special interest in this part is the description of the change in construction from a very elaborate chromatic instrument with two and even sometimes three rows of strings to a diatonic one with crooks for only a limited number of possible modulations, with, later, the tentative introduction of the pedal. From the description of the old technique of playing, the reason for this change becomes fairly obvious.

In the second part the harp music of the period is studied and the use that was made of the harp in orchestra and accompaniment. One point hardly appreciated now is made abundantly clear. There seems

to be no doubt that the harp held a very important position for the playing of the continuo as the only polyphonic instrument available then of sufficient range, compass and variety of power in tone to give the main support to a body of singers or players in concerted music.

The third part is an attempt to reconstruct from the sources available the style of playing in use at the various periods covered by the book, by analysing the music for harp in contrast to compositions for the other polyphonic instruments. It tells us in substance of the long losing battle fought all through the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries against the keyboard, after an early and signal victory over the lute and its cousins. Technical imperfection in construction and the consequent extreme difficulty in execution prevented the harp from holding its own in this struggle.

A very full appendix of musical examples, historical references and notes completes this excellent work, whose only defect seems to be that it is written in that particularly turgid and obscure German which the scholars of that country think best adapted to express their thoughts.

*Calvin's First Psalter (1539).* Edited by Sir Richard Terry. Ernest Benn. 10s. 6d. net.

The editor's preface explains the history and significance of the Psalter and the part which Clément Marot, the French poet and first translator of the Psalms into French metrical verse, had in it. With commendable good sense and to our great delight, Sir Richard Terry has had the original (and only known) copy, in the Royal Library in Munich, reproduced in facsimile. This forms the second section of the present volume. On that there follows a transcription into modern notation with sundry editings which, in the detailed explanation given, seem reasonable. Finally the twenty-one tunes which in their original form appeared as plain melodies, are harmonised. In the main the editor may be said to stop at the Tudors for his harmonisation. He allows the added parts to move beneath a held 'long' and produces some effects which would have astounded whoever wrote the tunes. It is no less than this that Bach did with the Lutheran tunes. Mention must be made of Mrs. K. W. Simpson's verse translations of the French originals.

Sc. G.

*Ferruccio Busoni.* Von Siegfried Nadel. Leipzig: Breitkopf. M.2.50.

According to Kretschmer, purity of race does not necessarily provide the most likely field for the workings of genius. We do not recall his having taken Busoni's case into account, though it is undoubtedly the most significant vindication of his theory to be found among musical geniuses of modern times. Busoni had a German mother and an Italian father, and his life was conditioned by that fortuity. He stood, as it were, poised between two races, and within his being the balance of their exuberant methods of artistic expression was perpetually held in check. This characteristic factor, which Herr Nadel calls *Zwiespaltigkeit*, and which we may translate as inner discordance, gave his life an element of conflict which was manifested in every aspect of his creative activity, and invested his mind with an unusual combina-

tion of tenacity and speed in its workings. It was as though he had been able to take from the Germans their powers of profound far-reaching reasoning while dispensing with the sluggishness which often clogs their cognitive faculty; and from the Italians the rapid brilliance of their intuitive insight, while escaping that superficiality which seems to be its unavoidable concomitant. In this conflict he may be likened to Goethe, though Goethe's inner discord was one not of races but solely of cultures. Goethe had his roots in Germany, and for all his passionate interest in Grecian and Latin culture could still feel himself, albeit with bitterness, a German on his return from the south and could accept that fate. Busoni never accepted such a decision and never could have done so. When the war of 1914 broke out this convinced internationalist found nothing in any possible form of victory to satisfy him, and when Italy threw up her neutrality he felt he had lost his last sane refuge. The fine phrases of contemporary politics can have found no sympathy with this keen thinker. At a time of life when many men would be seeking to understand the thoughts of their teachers the young Busoni was already doing his own thinking, an activity he never allowed to lapse. It is this that gives his music its strength of character, its originality, which is nothing less than the production of a restless mind, unsatisfied until it has assured itself by ceaseless testing that the material to its hand is apt to its purpose. It accepts no one else's thoughts, though it may chance to employ the same material others have used, just as Sibelius uses a scale passage as old as time and gives it the freshness of new birth. So with Busoni's music, near to Sibelius's as it indeed is. Goethe, to whom again Busoni stands in close spiritual relationship, wished that whoever set 'Faust' to music should be an artist who had lived in Italy, so that German and Italian might be mingled in one being. No one can be imagined more fitted to the task than Busoni, who fulfilled Goethe's requirements absolutely and was possessed of the artistic means to embody them in significant form.

Sc. G.

*Music and character.* By Thomas Fielden. Nicholson & Watson. 6s. net.

The analysis of the psychology of the listener (and here we include the performer who must of necessity be a listener) has only comparatively lately had the attention of critics. It is still looked on with suspicion by those who, in reaction to the vapourings which in the past stood for criticism, have worked to a more exact measure of scientific enquiry into the nature of the musical faculty. Science itself will hardly admit the claims of psychology to serious consideration, seeing little more in it than vague suppositions uncontrollable by laboratory experiment. Similarly the more exact musical thinker knowing what a fair field music, that indefinable art, offers for shallow generalisation, fears that it is in danger of being forced back into the realm of sentimental nonsense from which it has begun to escape, and resists the psychologist for that reason with redoubled energy. The present volume will in part weaken, in part strengthen, that resistance. The author's manner shows great sincerity and honesty of purpose, qualities which take the reader a good way with him. The text of the book is that 'music is a living fact, not an amusement,' in itself a sweeping



assertion. The author is jealous for his art and distressed at the prostitution it suffers by reason of its easy accessibility and its direct action on the senses. This leads him, in his enthusiasm, to some lengths. He tilts at the 'long-haired aesthete' (easy game) and welcomes the diminution of that type. Yet, one is inclined to ask, is your close-cropped hearty going to do more for, or with, music? The author dislikes the 'eccentric' in dress, but weakens his argument by pointing to Rembrandt, of all people, as being a respectable member of society. With this idea of respectability there is bound up in Mr. Fielden's mind that of 'healthiness.' The causes of spiritual health are a matter for careful investigation, and as yet the more profound psychologist (he, in fact, more than the amateur) owns to being without reliable clues. Mr. Fielden says we have 'progressed to the—healthy folk-song influence,' but does not tell us in what exactly this healthiness of folk-song lies. Is he sure that its influence is, even in a minority of cases, as he supposes? What are his data for the statement and by what process of reasoning has he arrived at this conclusion? We want, and shall welcome, nearer information in this extremely important question, and Mr. Fielden with his experience as a public-school master and his evident interest in the subject should be able to satisfy us. It will be time to decide whether we are progressing when psychology, with all her subtle, specialised laboratory technique, provides a regimen for the attainment of spiritual health and localises music's part therein.

Sc. G.

*Orchestral technique.* By Gordon Jacob. Oxford University Press. 5s. net.

This is a beginner's handbook, written in an easy, confidential style, as though from teacher to pupil. The author, a composer of note, speaks with that authority which comes from the possession of practitioner's knowledge. Also, besides having tested for himself these combinations of instruments, he has taught others to do so, and in this book a personal tone of voice can be heard. The fundamental argument of the book is that the 'arranging' of pianoforte or organ music forms a large part of the musician's lot, and it is the 'arranger' that Mr. Jacob is out to help. The difficulty about a book of this kind—one which we feel the author has not solved—is that while much of its learning might well apply to the ordinary activities of orchestration and therefore be entrusted to the general run of composition students, some of it has to do specifically with the orchestration of definite effects of pianoforte or organ music, to learn which would be a waste of time, if not positively harmful, to the ordinary student, however useful to one bent on becoming a skilled 'arranger.' An instance is the directions for orchestrating an Alberti Bass (p. 13). Only the 'arranger' could conceivably be faced with such a job of work. To give an exercise of this kind to a composition student is a dangerous form of inoculation. However, from the author's advice on the proper use of 'arrangements' (p. 100; rescore a duet arrangement of an orchestral work and then compare with the original) one feels that as a teacher he knows the right way. Which brings one back to one's opening sentence: this book is for the teacher of beginners, and he it is who must select from Mr. Jacob's store of wisdom what is applicable to one or the other of the two cases mentioned above.

Sc. G.

## REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

*La Revue Musicale.* Paris. February.

An article on 'Spain in French music' reviews known ground (Lalo, Chabrier, Debussy, Ravel) and breaks some that is fresh (Samazeuilh, Laparra). Byzantine music is written of by A. Gastoué in a general way, making a useful start before going deeper with Wellesz. Frank Choisy's study of Georges Migot is informative and has a bibliography. Pasquale Fienga contributes a second instalment of the notice on Joseph Scarlatti, an earlier member of the family.

March.

'L'amour sur la route,' or again, 'Dans l'enfer de Paris,' these chapter headings give a fair idea of the 'Promenades avec Mozart' contributed by Henri Gheon, excellent as far as imaginative writing goes. The next article immediately takes on a different tone, a businesslike description, with some research to back it, of the contents of the municipal library at Trèves, clearly set forth by Yves Lacroix-Novaro. G. Servois has a short series of minute notes, evidently meant to amuse, on certain organists of 'le grand siècle.' A two-volume book by Dr. Wicart entitled 'Le chanteur' is examined at length and in general favourably by Arthur Hoérée.

*Revue de musicologie.* Paris. February.

The fact that this excellent periodical now heads each number with the words 'Reconnue d'utilité publique' is worth noting as a sign of the honourable position our contemporary has won for itself and a sign of grace on the part of the government department which, we presume, bestowed the title. The article on Franz Beck, the eighteenth-century Mannheim symphonist who lived for fifty years or so in Bordeaux, deals with a newly-discovered volume of pianoforte sonatas. These are described by the writer, Georges de Saint-Foix, and a biography is promised later in the year from the pen of Mlle. M. L. Pereyra. A. Gastoué has a notice of certain MSS., from the Library of the Paris Conservatoire, mainly of liturgical music. Another MS. from the same library is the subject of an article by V. Fédorov. This is the autograph of a collection of Mussorgski's songs, dated in the author's hand 1857-1866. The MS. comprises seventeen original songs and one transcription. All have been published but one, the arrangement of a Tuscan popular song 'Ogni sabato.' The rest, which form the basis of this article, are a valuable find and, from what the writer has to say about the MS., will evidently enable a definitive (and much corrected) edition to be made.

*La Rassegna Musicale.* Turin. January.

Ildebrando Pizzetti's article on music and drama has authority as coming from the composer of 'Debora e Jaéle' and from the music-critic and Conservatoire Director. It deals largely with Italian aspirations for dramatic music as exemplified in the times stretching from Monteverdi to Verdi. A. Einstein takes up the same tale from the German point of view in an article on contemporary opera in that land. G. M. Gatti pulls the subject back again to Italy with the first of a series on the present situation of music there. E. Bloch contributes random thoughts on life and art.

## March.

American music is the subject of a thoroughly good article by G. Pannain. L. Parigi continues his studies of music in the works of different painters, this time with Watteau. The absence of illustrations takes away from the value of this article, a mere verbal description of a picture being of little help. Malipiero's random notes are similar in form to Bloch's in the last issue, though there the likeness ends. The number opens with an article on Haydn's pianoforte works by E. J. Dent, more clear and concise than anything else there.

*De Muziek.* Amsterdam. March.

An excellent article by K. Ph. Bernet Kempers on Haydn's string quartets gives much information in a relatively small space and pays proper tribute to the sound foundation Haydn laid in his work in that style. M. D. Calvocoressi takes the authentic text of Mussorgski's 'Khovantchina,' describes the work act by act and deals with questions arising from a comparison of Rimsky-Korsakov's edition with the original text. This scholarly study comes opportunely to the issue of Prof. Lamm's edition of the original text of the opera.

## April.

Two composers are memorialised here. Eugen d'Albert, who died this year, is written of on a note of high praise by Karl Holl, who succeeds within the space of five pages in giving a clear picture of the man and an attractive one. The other composer, Jan George Bertelman, died in 1854. He was a Dutchman of Amsterdam, wrote a great deal that is now forgotten, and in his day seems to have been of such importance in the musical life of his country that his being forgotten so soon would have seemed incomprehensible to his admirers could they have foreseen it. The article describing all this is well written by S. Duparc. A short description of the Library and Archives of the Paris Opéra comes from J. G. Prod'homme.

## May.

It is seldom that a printer of music is thought worthy enough in his life or work to be commemorated in an article. Here, however, is an interesting account of the work of Estienne Roger, of Amsterdam, who lived in the seventeenth century. A lengthy disquisition on a pianoforte piece called 'Erinnerung,' by Bruckner, is contributed with much enthusiasm by H. E. Reeser. From Karel Mengelberg there comes a short note on the transmission of music by wireless which is worth reading.

*Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft.* Leipzig. February.

In discussing a psalm 'Noli aemulari' by Thomas Stoltzer (d. according to Fétis 1526), Hans Joachim Moser challenges the opinions previously expressed by other writers and finds unmistakable signs of a *cantus-firmus*. The question is for the specialist and is closely argued. The 'Kirchenmelodien' of Johann Crüger are the subject of a long article by E. Fischer-Krückeberg, which deals fully and carefully with the matter, giving illustrations that are helpful. K. A. Rosenthal communicates information of a Mass in C discovered among the archives of a church in Baden, which may be by Mozart. E. H. Müller does as much for a pianoforte piece, possibly by W. F. Bach, just come to light in Dresden.

*The Musical Quarterly.* New York. April.

The Haydn Number is one of the best of its kind that has come to

our notice. In nine articles writers from America, Austria, France and England cover a large area, in each case having something useful, in most cases something original, to contribute. These articles may be ranged under three heads: Those dealing with biography, those dealing with the music, those which have to do with the æsthetic aspect. This method of classification takes into account only the general character of each article, and it will be found that no one of them keeps solely to its own section. The first is by far the largest. Taken in order of appearance, Hugo Botsiber (Vienna) writes of Haydn's relations with the singer Luigia Polzelli, who with her husband, the violinist, was in service at Esterhaz. Georges de Saint-Foix (Paris) contributes one of the more informative articles of this issue on the subject of Clementi and Haydn, examining the evidence as to their personal relationship and discussing possibilities of influence. Miss Marion Scott's 'Haydn in England' has a more personal quality in the actual writing than the rest, and this is probably what makes the reading of it so pleasant. With Miss Scott enthusiasm cannot be hid, nor can the reader withstand it. When this is combined with learning founded on much careful research and displayed with remarkable clarity, nothing remains but to feel grateful for a communication in which erudition loses its harshness while retaining its power to stimulate thought. A useful description of Haydn portraits by Joseph Muller (U.S.A.) has its place among the biographical articles, and finally an article on Haydn in America ('in' should have been 'and') by M. D. Herter Norton (U.S.A.) discusses with a large amount of detail the performances (before 1820) of the works on that side of the Atlantic. In the second category, purely musical articles, the first in order is by W. Oliver Strunk (U.S.A.), who examines Haydn's compositions for baryton, viola and bass, taking certain MSS. in the Library of Congress as basis for research. This is a valuable contribution and a scholarly piece of work. In an article on Haydn and the opera, Paul Henry Lang (U.S.A.) has some pertinent things to say with regard to Haydn's operatic works and his general attitude towards that form. Karl Geiringer (Vienna) has a learned article on the sketches for the 'Creation.' These sketches exist in two forms, firstly the originals in the National Library in Vienna, secondly Pohl's copy (now owned by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna), which has special value from the fact that the ink of the original already shows signs of fading. One example of a discussion of general æsthetics remains to be mentioned, an article entitled 'Haydn and the Viennese classical school' by Guido Adler (Vienna), which starts as though it were a series of random notes, then stiffens into a systematic examination of the main classes of composition in which Haydn worked. The number ends with the usual 'Views and Reviews' and book list.

*The Organ.* London. April.

The number before us gives a fair idea of the character and scope of this quarterly. Organs in all parts of the country are described in readable articles and specifications given. The range of this useful method of enquiry takes in Ely Cathedral at one end of the scale and Icklesham Church, Sussex, at the other. Continental organs evidently are not excluded, and in this number there is an article on Antwerp instruments. A section is given over to reviews of new organ music, and a number of letters to the editor show that many readers share in the general vitality of the paper.

Sc. G.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

The following abbreviations are used:—[B] Boosey, [Au] Augener, [W.R.] Winthrop Rogers, [C] Curwen, [E] Elkin, [O.U.P.] Oxford University Press, [G] Goodwin and Tabb, [P] Paxton, [Ch] Chester, [N] Novello.

### Songs

Besly, Maurice. *And After*. [B.]

Collins, Anthony. *I will make you brooches*. A shade obvious. The voice part a hint too precipitous. [O.U.P.]

Delius. *Avant que tu ne t'en ailles*. The latest Delius. Clearly song-writing suits his genius poorly. There are many moments of beauty, many skilful turns of phrase, but no cohesion, nothing to wonder at, so far is it from 'Brigg Fair.' [W.R.]

Gibbs, Armstrong. *Padraic the fiddler*. *The orchard sings to the child*. Patrick fiddles simply and pleasantly with a melodious voice to go with the solo violin. The orchard speaks to the child in a more sophisticated way with some modern turns of speech (harmony) and a melody that halts. Each song, different as it is from its neighbour, is well worked and worth looking through. [C.]

Henschel, George. *Triolet*. Short and wonderfully sweet. A minute masterpiece. [O.U.P.]

Khan, Maheboob. A set of six songs by one who is said to be 'the inventor of a system to put Hindoo music in writing.' The publisher's blurb also says that the 'ancient Hindoo art is like sandal-wood, the fragrance of which continues to pervade the atmosphere long after it has been consumed.' However that may be the fragrance of these songs is distinctly Mendelssohnian, which in the circumstances is rather surprising. Without knowing anything about Hindoo music it is possible to say that this is European of an outworn variety. [Faiz, Rotterdam.]

Maitland, J. A. Fuller. *Joseph*. Two songs from a play for village actors. Good plain straightforward singable tunes, admirable for the purpose for which they were designed. [O.U.P.]

Moeran, E. J. *Rosefrail*. A delicate and attractive setting of a poem by James Joyce. *The sweet o' the year*. Also excellent, more hearty in manner than the preceding song. Each of them should be taken account of by singers in search of new things. [Au.]

Powell, Donald. *A farm lullaby*. A successful setting, slightly monotonous but not unattractive. [C.]

Raphael, Mark. *Sleep*. This is worth having. The composer would sing it well. It is a simple setting of Fletcher, not without subtlety. [C.]

Rowley, Alec. *The way that lovers use*. This composer is stepping into the soft-treading shoes of a popular Edwardian song-writer, most of whose attributes he here shows himself to be possessed of. Many will think this song charming. [W.R.]



Swain Freda. *Winter field. Experience.* Singer and accompanist will have to know their business well to get adequately through this first little thing. But it will be worth the pains taken. The second is a piece of deliberate humour. The words are from Waley's '170 Chinese poems' and read better than they set. [Au.]

Wald, Max. *Autumn treasure.* This relies on effects of changing harmonies. It seems tortuous at first, a feeling which closer acquaintance largely, but not completely, dispels. [Au.]

#### Organ

Karg-Elert, Sigfrid. *Sempre Semplice.* Short, simple pieces by a writer who generally is far from being either. Most of them are modern editions of the old 'Andante in F,' though there are sudden twists of harmonic progression which will give a nasty turn to the type of listener who has been lulled into a sense of security by the 'Andante' atmosphere with which each movement begins. An exception may be made of the chaconne, which has more strength than all the rest. [P.]

Rheinberger, Josef. *Sonatas 2, 4 and 9.* This edition is the work of Harvey Grace. Each sonata is prefaced by a biography and excellent, helpful notes. The print is good. An edition to be recommended. [N.]

Weitz, Guy. *Symphony.* The name 'sonata' would have done as well and would not have misled intending players into imagining an orchestral accompaniment which does not exist. This is a work for the recitalist, not for ordinary church use. The last movement, at least, with its broken semiquaver progression would not fit into any church service here. Three movements providing good opportunity for the display in performance. [Ch.]

#### Miniature Full Scores

J. S. Bach. *Konzert für vier Klaviere.* The A minor concerto, a transcription of Vivaldi's for four violins in B minor, prefaced with notes by Arnold Schering. [Eulenburg and G.]

Delius. *A song before sunrise.* The work itself is well known and dates from 1918. The present pocket edition of the full score is rather faint, as regards print, in places. [Au.]

Verdi. *Messa da Requiem.* It seems strange that this work should have had to wait until this year for the appearance of a miniature full score. It is a very welcome addition to Eulenburg's excellent series. The print is a marvel of clearness and the squat little volume opens easily and is light to handle. [G.]

#### Arrangements

J. S. Bach. *A Short Passion from St. Matthew's Gospel* arranged and edited by W. Gillies Whittaker. This is a shortened version of the St. Matthew Passion. The present reviewer has found himself unaccountably but most undeniably shocked at the treatment here given to a work whose inviolability has by this latest assault become more than ever important in his eyes. His reaction has been immediately hostile and therefore he is in no position to deliver a fair judgment, neither is there space in this note for taking the many points at issue.

A description of the work must suffice. After all, it is open to every reader to make up his own mind, and indeed the reviewer strongly advises the getting of a copy of this work. It will provide an opportunity for some hard thinking. In his excellent prefatory note the editor quotes 'the opinion of those concerned in its preparation.' We may take it, then, that the responsibility for the appearance of this edition rests also with C. Sanford Terry who provides the English text and E. T. Davies and Gwilym Williams who provide that in Welsh. Help is also acknowledged from Stanley Roper. The reasons given for this shortening of the St. Matthew Passion are: That as it stands it is too long for ordinary use and the writing too complex for ordinary resources; that when the work is cut in performance the narrative remains as it is and thus outweighs the set numbers. The work has been cut down to ninety minutes. A selection has been made (and very ably) so as to keep a certain balance between recitative, aria and chorus. Further alterations are: Only four-part chorus used, which means leaving out the opening chorus (replaced by a chorale) among others, and having the echo in the last chorus played by instruments; also, to bring the high tessitura of the evangelist's part within the range of the ordinary singer the whole work has been transposed down a tone.

Sc. G.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

In my difficulty I naturally turn to MUSIC AND LETTERS for a solution. Can any of your many readers assist me in discovering the meaning of the words 'treble buckelles' in the following extract from an account for the purchase of instruments for certain Town Waits in the year 1608:—

'Item. Bought for the Weightes of this Cittie three hooboyes, Where(of) ij countertenors and a treble VIu. Item, a tenor cornett XLs. Item iiij or treble buckelles iiijs.'

We are sure of two things, that the word is 'buckelles' and that it has nothing to do with the 'badges' worn by the Waits. It has been suggested that 'buckles' were used for the straps in carrying instruments, but treble instruments would not need them: it has been treated as a phonetic transcription of 'bugles': but the price, one shilling each (about four shillings present value) would not be sufficient for even treble instruments. I am inclined to believe that it is a phonetic transcription of an anglicised French and Italian word 'bocals,' i.e., mouthpieces (cf. *Century Dictionary*), probably for treble cornetts. The price is about right, for they were quite small, turned in horn or ivory and easily lost. If any confirmation of this view or other suggestion is forthcoming, I should much value the information on a post card addressed to Faulkbourne, Witham, Essex.

Yours very faithfully,

FRANCIS W. GALPIN.

## GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### Orchestral

COLUMBIA.—Beethoven: *Coriolan Overture* (Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg). As in practically all recordings from this source the record before us (and that of the *Egmont Overture* which has reached us at the same time) produces a feeling of complete safety. Apart from a growing tendency to emphasise *rallentandi*, Mengelberg's reading is always reasonable. It does justice to the music because it allows the works to speak for themselves, giving them nothing more (and nothing less) than performances that have careful study and relentless rehearsal as preparation. Everything is in its right place and the listener can accept the performance as a clear representation of the works.

Elgar: *Enigma Variations* (The Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty). The playing is sound and the solo work effective. As regards interpretation, the registration is careless. An instance: Variation 9 (Nimrod, with the broad melody) five bars after 35, the score has *piano crescendo* increasing through four bars to *forte*. This performance has something more like *mezzo-forte crescendo* increasing to double *forte*, which is exhilarating enough but leaves nothing for the true climax twelve bars later which, when it comes, has to be prepared and made melodramatic by a sudden *dim-cres.* Whoever has once heard this done as Elgar wrote it cannot be satisfied with anything different.

Mendelssohn: *Symphony No. 4 in A—'The Italian'* (The Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty). Following the issue of Mendelssohn's 'Scotch' symphony (see MUSIC AND LETTERS, January, 1930) there now appears this record of the 'Italian.' In this day of the world the latter work seems an infinitely greater piece of imaginative writing than the former, with more originality of outlook and a more dignified style of construction. There need be no hesitation in deciding to get this record which provides a thoroughly good performance, expressive and properly in control, going forward at a lively pace and holding the rhythm easily in order. The enthusiasm behind the playing of the opening tune is in itself worth getting the record to hear.

DECCA.—The last Decca records to be reviewed here (see MUSIC AND LETTERS, April, 1930) were an excellent batch and it has been a matter for regret that since that date nothing more has reached us. Many of the records issued by this firm were of outstanding merit and readers will hardly need to be reminded of them, notably of that remarkable recording of Delius's 'Sea-drift,' which still is among the best Delius recordings available. Now at length Decca records appear again in these pages with a series of 'Polydor' records which the firm issues under their label. But are we to have no more records from the firm

itself to continue the good work done with the Delius record mentioned above and Vaughan Williams's 'Wenlock Edge' song-cycle?

J. S. Bach: *Third Brandenburg Concerto* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Furtwängler). An orderly performance, distinguished in manner, giving the music an august stateliness that seems right for it. (First movement only received.)

Beethoven: *Egmont Overture* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer). A sober, straightforward reading, nothing wrong with it as regards playing; but it is somehow a little dull.

Johann Strauss: *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (Berlin-Charlottenburg Orchestra conducted by Julius Prüwer). As above. The reading is lucid and reasonable enough, for all it lacks brilliance.

Richard Strauss: *Salome's Dance* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer). Compared with a previous recording of this dance the present record is tame and the actual playing at times loose.

Wagner: *Prelude to 'Tristan and Isolde'* (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Furtwängler). A most satisfying record, finely played and interpreted.

H.M.V.—Max Bruch: *First violin concerto* (Yehudi Menuhin, the L.S.O. conducted by Sir Landon Ronald). Splendid playing, full of that urgency and vitality which used to be thought the sign, on the one hand of long experience, on the other hand of full maturity. Our knowledge of the special circumstances of this amazing case make the record an extraordinary one. Besides that the mastery of the playing gives the record significance of another kind. One can but wonder.

Chopin: *Pianoforte concerto in F minor* (Arthur Rubinstein, the L.S.O. conducted by John Barbirolli). The solo work here is very effective, the whole concerto being played with an easy mastery that is delightful to listen to. That the orchestral accompaniment sounds perfunctory is not the fault of the playing but of the music.

Coleridge-Taylor: *Petite suite de concert* (L.S.O. conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent). There is really nothing to be said about this pleasant music, so effectively put together, saying so little so well. This record is a good one, played energetically and with a swing.

Elgar: *Falstaff* (The L.S.O. conducted by the Composer). Following the issue of the *Two Interludes* earlier in the year (see MUSIC AND LETTERS, January) there now comes the complete work, an addition to the series of Elgar records which is extremely welcome. 'Falstaff' is the kind of work which must be studied much and often to be really understood. It is full of allusions to incidents in the life of the character and is riddled with cross-references. Now, with the record prefaced by notes from the composer's original article in the *Musical Times*, it is possible to worry at the problem and, with the miniature score (Novello), to get the matter clear. After that one can listen to the music, and what at first will probably have seemed a disjointed series of quips glossing a rather bothersome text becomes consecutive reasoning. That initial work of elucidation must be gone through and there it is that the gramophone helps. The present performance has the authority of the composer's personal direction. It must, therefore,

be accepted as right as regards *tempi* and dynamics. Some of the actual playing is ragged though on the whole the effect is satisfactory.

Edward German: *March rhapsody* (L.S.O. conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent). Good straightforward performance of music that brings back memories of Edwardian garden-parties.

### Vocal

COLUMBIA.—Rutland Boughton: *The Immortal Hour*. This is a closely condensed version of the opera, on four sides. The singers are Gwen Frangeon-Davies, Arthur Cranmer, W. Johnstone-Douglas and Bruce Flegg. The Queen's Theatre supply chorus and orchestra under Ernest Irving, who has made this arrangement 'with loving care' (see accompanying leaflet). It could not be expected to do more than hint at the work in so reduced a space. The hints given are to the point, however, and the general standard of performance such as will satisfy admirers of the opera.

Folk Songs, sung by Annette Blackwell. These are a sheer delight. 'The crystal springs' on one side, 'The wraggle taggle gipsies' and 'Hares on the mountains' on the other. Nothing much can be said about them except how much one enjoys it all, and that the listener can say equally well for himself.

DECCA.—Gustav Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder* (Heinrich Rehkemper with orchestra). A very sensitive and, when one considers what might have been the case, a restrained rendering of these unusual songs. Those who are not constitutionally debarred from hearing Mahler without either boredom or retchings will own to the powerful appeal of this cycle of introspective songs. Even those who cannot stomach Mahler will, if they are musicians, realise the fine workmanship there is in them. They are among the least derivative of his compositions. Indeed it is difficult to imagine any but he setting out to clothe such poems with sound, and creating just this quality of music for them.

Wagner: *Excerpts from 'Meistersinger' and 'Lohengrin'* (Fritz Wolff accompanied by an orchestra). A splendid record. The singing is admirable and comes through well.

Weber: '*Ocean thou mighty monster*' (Elisabeth Ohms accompanied by an orchestra). An interesting record by a fine singer. Her voice is momentarily unsteady at the beginning, but the general spaciousness and dignity of her delivery are remarkable.

### Pianoforte Solo

COLUMBIA.—Debussy: *Suite Bergamasque* (Walter Gieseking). A hearer of Latin race might say this was pedantic, lacking in verve, perhaps in delicacy. But think of the even pace, the exact emphasis, the complete absence of rhetoric. In those qualities lies the goodness of this record. It leaves a pleasant taste.

Liszt: *Second Hungarian Rhapsody* (Ignaz Friedman). If one must go on hearing this piece let it then be in such a performance as this.

Sauer: *Echoes of Vienna* (Ania Dorfmann). Really! Whatever the



circumstances which guided the choice of this inconsequential bit of frivolity, regret at the waste of a pretty talent must occupy our thoughts as we listen. Apart from that, a clear record.

DECCA.—Chopin: *Mazurka*, op. 7, No. 1 and *Fantasie Impromptu*, op. 66 (Alexander Brailovsky). Splendid playing, graceful and taut, perfectly controlled.

### *Chamber Music*

COLUMBIA.—Brahms: *String Quartet in A minor*, op. 51, No. 2 (The Lener Quartet). One's earliest impression of the playing of this quartet was of its perfection. Later one feared whether that very perfection would not rob the interpretation of character. Yet mark the attack of the second subject of the second movement of this work. Apart from the fact that it is slightly hurried and so loses some of its inherent forcefulness the playing here has undeniable strength and is of a restless energy which gives it character of a quality recognisable as belonging only to the Lener players in ensemble. The whole of this record is wonderfully well done and may confidently be recommended.

Sc. G.

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